BING

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Edited by REG BRISTO

JUN
1988

No.88

For 50 years Crosby's baritone made him an identifiable part of Americana.

IT is with profound sorrow that we record the passing of our member, BOB JONES, of 80 Beech Street, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear, NE32 5LD. Bob died early in May and the news came as a stunning blow to those who knew him. The North-East is rich in Crosby people and certainly Bob was amongst the first flight. Grievously, Bob was only 37 and leaves a widow, Carol, and two young children.

Bob had suffered from a lung condition for some years; indeed, the last few years had been a constant and valiant fight against it. We learn that his death came about from a severe heart attack not so much from the lung complaint but from the strain and extra weight the necessary treatment had imposed on him.

By its very nature, Crosbyana obviously has to get accustomed to members passing away for they are usually of an elderly band. This doesn't mean that their passing isn't sad and that they are not missed, but when one so comparatively young as Bob departs this life the loss and shock are that much heavier.

For one so comparatively young, Bob had a comprehensive knowledge of Bing, and a collection to go with it. But his interest, tho' primarily centred on Bing, also extended to Bing's famous contemporaries - such as Jolson, Como, Todd and others. Indeed, Bob had become known to a wider circle through his taping and corresponding activities. He had also been a regular attender at both the Leeds and Gateshead events and thus had met many fellow members. A quiet, genial, man.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Carol and family.

We have learned also of the death of BERT SAUNDERS of Slough but are not at this stage acquainted with the nature of his passing. He was the particular friend of VIC BYNE, also of Slough, who passed away three years ago...

To add to what has been a grim list for Spring 1988 we have heard also that FRED TILT, of Bromsgrove, passed away suddenly on 20th May.... Both Bert and Fred were in the veteran stage of Bing people but, as is invariably the case, had made friends all over the country.

BING

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X

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We necessarily started off this issue in a melancholy, sombre note; and we again reiterate our feeling of sorrow, and of our condolences to those bereaved. Additionally we had news of two members who had lost by death their life-time companions - their wives. A distressing situation requiring enormous adjustment and a re-kindling of interest in things which are, no doubt, more mundane but essential to living. We wish them well and have them in our thoughts.

Even as we were finishing this issue, we turned on the news and heard that in America the makers of cigarettes had been sued by a man who lost his wife because of her smoking. There have been rumours and suggestions of this happening for some years but, apparently, this was the first case to come to court.

The lady had smoked - CHESTERFIELDS. There was a clip showing a TV advertisement for those cigarettes. We almost expected to hear that the lady began smoking Chesterfields because of the dulcet tones of Bing Crosby..... No one knew about lung cancer those years ago; nobody warned us! Now they know - and they still advertise.

EDITORIAL

IT is quite a thought that our members in New York are almost as far away from our members like KEN TWISS and his colleagues stoutly working away in Tacoma as they are from us here in the United Kingdom! A thought which may help to put things in true perspective on occasion.

Our reason for mentioning it is that we stand in considerable admiration for Ken Twiss and the BCHS in far away Tacoma, Washington, and we also most certainly do for stalwarts like Justice Frank Smith - and ERNEST SUTKOWSKI! The latter especially so right now for Ernest has been conducting the most remarkable and sustained campaign to wake up America to the heritage that was, and is, Bing Crosby. For a start, he wrote to no less than 188 radio stations reminding them of...well, here is his letter and we especially like the PS:

> May 3 is the birth date of Bing Crosby. His legacy to our American heritage included 30 consecutive years of radio broadcasts, probably the longest, most successful reign in the medium of any one performer.
>
> It is important for us, in this relatively short period of nearly 68 years of radio, to continue to remember Bing.
>
> What better time than Bing's birthday? What finer, more appropriate place than public radio?
>
> Bing's voice, heard around the world more than any other during that 30-year period, and surely during the 68-year history of the medium, deserves to be preserved through broadcast of his recordings.
>
> Please remember Bing.
>
> Cordially, ERNEST H. SUTKOWSKI,
> 20 Baldwin Road, Saddle River,
> New Jersey, 07458.
>
> PS. I have no financial or commercial interest in Bing Crosby. As a Bing Crosby fan and an American my interest is purely artistic and cultural.

Imagine 188 radio stations! Even with the proliferation of local radio stations here in the past few years that figure dwarfs ours - naturally, as we are a "pocket-handkerchief" in size compared with the States. A little easier to plug Bing here! Coast-to-coast DOES exist in America - but difficult to achieve. Here, the BBC is heard by virtually eceryone should you get a request played!

And that letter: should you be stuck and feel letter-writing is beyond you, add to Ernest's splendid model above a bit about films and gramophone records - TV too - and you can approach anyone on Bing's behalf !!

Congratulations to Ernest Sutkowski!. It remains to be said that he received many cordial replies - and airings of Bing. And he included to some a list of Irving Berlin songs Bing had recorded. 74 would you believe? Some of them two or three times.

Bing plugging with a spiritedldedication ! We'll pring the Berlin -Bing discography next time.

WITHOUT A SONG

So far as can be ascertained, this is a hitherto untold story of an experience that befell Bing on his first ever visit to Britain - indeed, to Europe. It is a very illuminating story, too, as you will discover.

EVERYONE knows that it took a war - WORLD WAR II - to finally bring BING CROSBY to Britain. This alone is a quite remarkable facet, for all through the 30s at regular intervals there were press reports, especially in show business papers like THE MELODY MAKER, ERA, and THE STAGE that Mr. Crosby was "definitely" visiting Britain 'this year'and would be appearing at the London Palladium, or the Empire Liverpool, or the Paramount, Manchester, etc. etc. But they were always the wildest rumours - inspired, no doubt, by a general wish that Bing would come to Britain.

> Bing didn't come of course yet, in 1944, he had been a world star for 14 years and in all that time his fantastic popularity here (and elsewhere for that matter) had never wavered or faltered. We were, of course, regularly regaled with his films, each with its crop of great new songs, and his gramophone records. From the earliest days he became that hackneyed term - A house hold name. "Bing!"

Perhaps people realised that with his tremendous radio, film, recording and personal appearance commitments it was virtually impossible for him to leave the States. Nowadays, American 'stars' are here almost at the drop of the proverbial hat!

As mentioned, came the War - and so came Bing. In his light-hearted auto-biography, CALL ME LUCKY, Bing devoted some space to this momentous wartime trip to Britainand Europe generally and as one would expect, it made a great impression on him. But he didn't tell the following story - and as far as we can findout, never told anyone of it. Like so many of his generous charity projects.

One commonly hears the saying "In War-time human life becomes cheap..." Quite and profoundly untrue, of course. It may be cheapened by man's inhumanity to man. And death bec mes, for want of a better term, wholesale. It has to when an enormous battleship can disappear under the waves, carrying its crew of three thousand or more, in a matter of minutes; saturation bombing, ignoring the principle of military targets only, kills thousands in a night (we needn't even mention Hiroshima and Nagazaki) and enormous armies clash with tanks, artillery and all the other wholesale instruments of death. And amidst all the contrived devastation and death, there are accidents - accidents which can happen in peace-time, naturally.

SUCH a disaster occurred in the late summer of 1944 shortly after, it would seem, Bing's arrival in Britain. It is likely, indeed probable, that some of our members will recall the terrible day when an American Liberator bomber plane on a training mission, crashed onto the village of Frecklington, close by Warton in Lancashire, which in turn is close to Blackpool. Accidents, with military reverses, were seldom reported at the time, mainly not to give intelligence or comfort to the enemy (quaint phrasing!) and not to lower general morale of the population.

> Which is why a disaster such as the above is still the subject of research if not investigation nearly 50 years after it occurred, particularly in aviation publications, of which FLYPAST has recently carried articles and letters on the disaster - THE DAY FRECKLETON WEPT.

Two Liberators were on test flights when news of a violent storm approaching was received at the base at Warton with instructions that all airborne planes were to be recalled immediately. It was revealed that the landing pattern was for planes to fly west past Blackpool Tower, out over the Irish Sea, turn south, then east, drop down to 500 ft and come in over the airfield; this was the drill followed but as they came in the storm hit and the two pilots realised they couldn't land. A sharp decision to turn north and fly to Prestwick was taken. One of the planes got away in the new direction but the evidence is that the second plane was struck by lightning. The appalling consequence was that the huge plane crashed onto the village school.....

> "The Liberator hit Trinity School at 10.47 am and part of the aircraft broke loose, went across the street and hit the Sad Sack Cafe. All of the Whittle family who owned the cafe, and a few customers who had gone in there to shelter from the storm were milled.
>
> A civilian huddled from the rain in a telephone kiosk told people that he had seen lightning strike the B24 (the Liberator plane) but nobody believed him. It transpired that many years later a nurse, Lieutenant Jane Chestnutwood, told an American association that she had been watching out of the base (Warton) hospital window and indeed also witnessed lightning hit the B24
>
> The aircraft hit the nursery classroom. Older children in the main school all got out safely and ran out into the pouring rain. American servicemen and local civilians attempted to rescue the small ones and succeeded in bringing out five of them. They were taken to the US Station Hospital but unfortunately two died from their burns. Of the three five-year-olds who survived, two were village tots - George Carey and Ruby May Whittle (no relation to the family who owned the cafe). The third was David Madden whose father was at nearby RAF Kirkham.....the Lancashire papers, especially the one published in Blackpool, have voluminous files concerning the Freckleton crash. In Trinity Church, Freckleton, there is a Memorial Book which has photographs of the children who lost their lives in the disaster.

"Ruby (May Whittle) recently related that whilst she, George and little David were lying in the American Hospital, Bing Crosby visited Warton to entertain the troops.

BING WAS TOLD ABOUT THT THREE TOTS AND IMMEDIATELY WENT TO SEE THEM. RUBY SAID HE SAT ON HER BED AND HELD THE TIPS OF HER FINGERS THAT WERE STICKING OUT OF THE BANDAGES. HE ASKED IF SHE WOULD LIKE HIM TO SING SOMETHING FOR HER. ALL SHE COULD THINK OF WERE TWO SONGS THAT HER MUM ALWAYS SANG: "WHITE CHRISTMAS" AND "DON'T FENCE ME IN". BUT RUBY SAID THAT THE SIGHT OF THE THREE TOTS LYING THERE PROVED TOO MUCH FOR HIM AND BING COULD NOT SING A NOTE.

HE FINALLY GOT UP AND WENT OUT INTO THE HALL TO COMPOSE HIMSELF. THEN HE CAME BACK AND STOOD IN THE DOORWAY AND SANG THE TWO SONGS WHICH HAD BEEN REQUESTED

We are greatly indebted to LEN HAWKINGS of Ashton, Bristol, who sent us the material upon which the above is based; and also to Len's daughter-in-law whose father wrote about the disaster on his fairly recent return from America where he further investigated this disaster.

A harrowing introduction for Bing; we can imagine his thoughts went back to America where four lads of his own were and realising just what was going on in Europe. Whatever his sons may - we say MAY - have forced him into in later years, this story shows what an intensely humanitarian and caring man he was; no hard-boiled show-biz personality. Of course, those "tot" survivors are now around 50 years of age. It is in any case an intensely moving story and no doubt there are many who still mourn for what happened on the day that Freckleton wept.

It might fairly be argued that anyone seeing five children in such a pitiful state would need to have been made of granite not to have been touched. But note, Bing immediately asked to see these tots on hearing of their plight - held their finger tips - then sang from the doorway... it conjures up an intensely moving picture.

It may be a very long shot indeed - but does anyone happen to know Ruby Whittle? As stated, these three survivors would be around 50 years of age now - and no doubt Ruby is long married and no longer called Whittle. How interesting if it turned out someone does know her...

FOLLOWERS of football, and indeed all those who read the sports pages, will surely be aware that the highly successful young soccer team of Nottingham Forest are fielding a brilliant young player glorying in the name of GARY CROSBY. Forest's ebullient and extrovert manager, the well-known Brian Clough, in an interview stated that he had immediately christened the lad BING. We feel there must be a story behimd this lad's name - perhaps his father is an ardent Crosbyite? We were about to write to him - or Mr. Clough - to find out but realised it was the close season and the City Ground certainly deserted.

LESLIE GAYLOR

AS INDEFATIGABLE AS EVER IN HIS FAVOURITE CAUSE !

I FEEL I should begin this time by thanking so many members - and for that matter, non-members! - who contrive to read the BING magazine! - for their letters of appreciation for the issue of the Tenth Anniversary set and the part I played in its fruition.

Letters have come from far and wide, including correspondents from America, Australia and the Continent. The kind comments expressed have, in turn, been passed on to far-seeing producing Ken Barnes and his musical associate, Pete Moore. I've also had warm letters from a couple of long-time contacts of mine in the musical press, namely; Derek Johnson the noted journalist and reviewer and Nigel Hunter, deputy editor of MUSIC WEEK, the dealers' trade publication, and for many years on the staff of British Decca. It was heartening to note their opinions that the old Bing-Buddy Cole recordings in their new format were infinitely better than the old, especially as if it weren't for the new 'processing' they wouldn't have been issued at all in any form. They would still be lying unheard in the Bekens warehouse.

> The story of how it all came about has been told many times and I certainly am not going to retell it; but it all came back to me forcefully when I read the last issue of BING. Like most members I imagine, spurred on by my unflagging interest in matters Crosby, I make a start on reading this magazine just as soon as it lands on the mat! And what a joyful experience it invariably is! That is certainly how I tackled the March issue - until I came to the Letters page - and read Nick Carter's comments on the Anniversary Set. I must confess that I was, most unusually, incensed at what was said.

There are, I know, two schools of thought on this set - I willingly concede that; for a start, these new accompaniments were grafted on to Cole's original accompaniments to heighten their appeal to a new, modern, record-buying public which looks to the latest stereo, digital, sounds that are now available. Granted that, it is also true that the people who buy Crosby records are often NOT of that variety! They like the old, original, sounds. And why not? We had NEW TRICKS and SOME FINE OLD CHESTNUTS years ago. But I feel that the record companies came to the conclusion, as the years rolled by, that that was as far as they could go on these Crosby/Cole recordings. So, bearing all this in mind, and remembering also the hard work and initiative that went into producing the Anniversary Set, I felt strongly that it was uncharitable, indeed, most unfair, to describe them (Moore's arrangements) as "souped-up", which alas was Nick Carter's assessment. Again, I concede that there are those who enjoy these tracks unaltered - but it cannot be denied that these tracks have been broadcast in a way that will heighten Bing's ability and style in a way that wouldn't have been possible with the add tions.

They enable the record presenters to get away, if only temporarily, from McNAMARA'S BAND, TOO-RAL-LOO-RAL-LOO-RAL and the DON'T FENCE ME IN hardy annuals. A visitor to my house recently, in discussing the set, made what I felt was a telling comment. He felt that the Cole originals were "tinkly". I found myself agreeing with this; but it is important to bear in mind that Bing dashed off these songs in ad hoc fashion to Buddy's piano, in the knowledge that they would be slotted into radio programmes, merely occupying two or three minutes. They were not tailored as commercial records. It follows that to listen, straight off, to a dozen, twenty, or even thirty of these songs in a non-stop sequence would be slightly tedious perhaps, and - "tinkly"!

> The best of them, it might be felt, to offset this impression were selected for the NEW TRICKS and FINE OLD CHESTNUTS albums. I certainly hope that Mr. Carter's dismissal of the set, therefore, is not universally shared. I'm sure it isn't - in fact, from the mail I mentioned above, I KNOW it isn't.

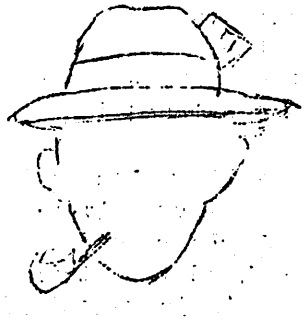
Lest, however, Nick feels I am too enraptured with the Anniversary Set - and others may think that also - I think there are some really splendid tracks; some have 'come off' better than others, however, in my own opinion. I would have liked less 'echo' on some tracks. And the volume of the orchestra might have been 'lowered' on a couple of tracks to advantage, But far and away, I am delighted that these tracks did get released for us - instead of lying unheard, perhaps for ever more.

There is a slight but important error on the previous page; the very last line should read "WITHOUT the additions."

For the lamentable fact is that record companies - commercial profit-making concerns of course - were just not interested in the songs as originally performed.

And by the way, in a letter to me of March last year, Mrs. Kathryn Crosby conveyed to me that all the Bing-Buddy Cole recordings were supposed to have been sent to her house from Beken's warehouse and that if they had been sold "it would be very sad". Which some may find ominous !

Mention of Derek Johnson above brings to mind the fact that he was at the 1960 HOLIDAY IN EUROPE recordings at Decca with Malcolm Lockyer as the MD. And Derek tells me he invited Bing to his house one evening for dinner - and that Bing stayed until 4am reminiscing about the past! So Bing didn't always retire early. And Derek and Bing were also over at Michael Holliday's home on several occasions at that time. I remember Mike's boundless admiration at the calm and professional way Bing recorded his songs. Buu who wasn't?



And Mike himself was a pretty casual and relaxed character - it seemed but events proved that was at some considerable effort. And who can doubt it was the same with Bing? Great artists who strive always to give of their best invariably fret and worry about what they do, no matter the casualness of the air they adopt.

In the ten years that have passed since Bing departed this mortal coil, I have had no end of people contactimg me, out of the blue, wanting to sell me Crosby records, mainly 78s. And in all cases they are asking a small fortune for them!

One person who approached me by letter recently was none other than a sister from a local convent!

FOR those of us in the Senior Citizen category - I refer to those in the UK mainly - radio is still rewarding if you search out the programmes that are free of the dreaded modern "pop". I was delighted to hear Bing well represented on recordings that tied in with St. Patrick's Day, his birthday (May 3rd) and the 100th birthday of the great man of song, Irving Berlin. And while no doubt Bing will continue to figure strongly in world entertainment, we do live in a forgetful world so its good that such splendid, prominent people such as ALAN DELL, GERRY DIDYMUS down here on Radio Solent, Stan White with his Cambridge (Radio) contacts and so many others, not forgetting those members of the Circle who ensure that Bing's records get plenty of airings.

MANY times correspondents ask me what issue in the last few years have given me most satisfaction? Difficult to answer, as always. Well, taking what I've said above about the Anniversary Set, the several albums by the independent labels have been most exciting. John Marshall waved the magic wand for me - to coin a phrase - when he got the release of GETTING TO KNOW YOU on the 'IN DEMAND' album, and then ANY TOWN IS PARIS WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG on the 'GIVE ME THE SIMPLE LIFE' issue. Bing was in fine form on these two songs and I've longed wanted them on album. The release finally, too, of OL' SPRING FEVER was an especial delight. But it would be easy to go on - I much appreciated THE RADIO YEARS material, especially in such fine sound quality.

It was particularly unfortunate that Steve Hoffman left American MCA shortly after launching the compact disc, BING CROSBY SINGS AGAIN especially so as he had mentioned to Kettering stalwart, Stan White, that he had located the unissued recording of OH YOU CRAZY MOON and might well have issued it - recorded 24th December, 1947.

Finally, I have to end on a sombre note. I was, with so many others, completely stunned to learn of the death of BOB JONES of Jarrow. Although comparatively young he had a vast knowledge of Bing. My condolences go to his wife and young family.

Editor: Undeniably, there are those who maintain they prefer the Bing/Buddy tracks unadorned - but mail shows them to be in a considerable minority. That doesn't stop their's being a point of view, but Les has put the situation quite clearly, and eloquently, the choice is stark - have them as 'treated' - or not at all! Surely they are an attractive set? Perhaps we'd all like them better if we didn't KNOW they had been refurbished !

Yes indeed, we too have been assailed from all quarters since Bing died with people who feel they may be sitting on a goldmine because they have half-a-dozen Crosby records. My answer is usually a stock one: Bing's records sold so prolifically that there are only a very few that are hard to obtain these days and I'm afraid yours are not in that category. This is especially so since virtually all Crosby recordings have now been issued on LPs.

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

Showplace of the Nat[illegible] Rockefeller Center

STARTS TOMORROW

Doors Open 11:30 A. M.

America's favorite troubadour singing haunting, melodic new tunes . . . surrounded by a large cast of expert comedians . . . cleverly enacting a brightly human, engaging story . . . a delightful, amusing romantic picture to make happy hearts lighter.

BING CROSBY

JOAN BLONDELL • MISCHA AUER

East Side of Heaven

Irene Hervey . . . C. Aubrey Smith . . . Jerome Cowan and "Sandy" . . . A Universal Picture

New Walt Disney Cartoon: "SOCIETY DOG SHOW"

ON THE GREAT STAGE,

"TO THE FAIR"—a colorful, spectacular revue to salute the New York World's Fair in the spirit of "The World Of Tomorrow".

WHEN I TAKE MY SUGAR

::::: A DIVERSION BY THE INIMITABLE

FRED REYNOLDS

****

THE advice, proffered by an expert several months ago, was unequivocal and blunt. "What you need," he said, "is a computer. Solve all your problems. Just transfer all the information from your Crosby etcetera collections, from records, tapes and films to floppy disks and youcould produce on-screen or print out any details you require at any time. Easy with some Cardbox software." Normally of sound mind he seemed serious enough and not in his cups but I demurred. A quick calculation showed that if I followed his prescription the exercise could be completed sometime between the next two appearances of Halley's Comet and even my well-intentioned counsellor could but agree that it would leave precious little time for me to enjoy the fruits of my labour. He was, nonetheless, undeterred. (I'd better point out that he wasn't trying to sell me anything and that he had my best interests at heart - he'd better have as he's my son-in-law).

"They're so versatile," he persisted, "you'd surely find one very helpful. He paused, eyeing me carefully, immersed in some esoteric world of his own. "Spreadsheets?" he mused, and answered himself, "No. Database? No. Graphics? No. And I can't see you playing'Space Invaders!". He sounded disappointed and his glance indicated that I was being very awkward indeed. Then he beamed: "Of course, the very thing as you're such a rottem typist." He knows how to make a subtle point.

"Let's face it," he went on - he also knows television's popular cliches - "you'd be about as much at home in a typing pool as the windbag politician in a Trappist Monastery. I could find you a nice word processor and everything you typed would be professional standard and flawless." (It is my experience that the two are not necessarily synonymous but I'll let that pass other than to relate that following the War when standards had fallen to an alarmingly low level there was in my office a Miss Meny whose lack of typing proficiency was awsome and those unfortunate enough to be the recipient of her mal-de-practice regarded it as "emeny action" - a neat paraphrase of a wartime journalistic phrase).

The suggestion, playing as it did on my appalling ineptitude, sounded attractive but implausible. I was at first unpersuaded that even a modern miracle of electronics could make me a skilful, but he was insistent and made it sound so easy that I became convinced that Bing could have written CALL ME LUCKY in about ten minutes and that GONE WITH THE WIND could have been run off by Margaret Mitchell in no more than twenty and that would have included the screenplay. The man has a silver tongue: he assured me that no little green pac-man would appear on-screen to gobble up a carefully constructed pithy phrase and so I bought a computer and entered a technological and alien world of electronic wizardry.

MY TROUBLES started the day after the contraption arrived. Silver-tongue had "set it up" and said that I could now go ahead. He knows about seventeen computer languages and thinks that anyone who can't understand how to operate the monsters must have a surplus of soft cerebral tissue. I remembered, too late, that one of our leading journalists had once been a guest on Parkinson's 'Desert Island Discs' programme and had, without hesitation, selected for his luxury item a computer and word processor. "If then," he said, "I was cast away for forty years I might learn how to use the damn thing."

The user manual was comprised of no less than 560 pages of small-type instructions and I am now convinced that a fortune awaits the man or woman who can combine a knowledge of computers

with good, plain, grammatical English but, unfortunately, the two disciplines appear to be totally incompatible. I found the jargon to be impenetrable and the instructions would have been no less incomprehensible had they been written in Swahili. I was reminded of the time, in my youth, when I had tried unsuccessfully to read James Joyce's 'Ulysses'. During the first few days I progressed from utter bafflement to totsl bewilderment: I discovered that I didn't know a ROM from a RAM, an ECHO from an EXE.BAT, a DOS from a DOODLE or for that matter, an ASCII from my elbow and as for "booting it up" I must confess to being sorely tempted. My uneasy familiarity with a QWERTY keyboard helped me not at all and my next step was to purchase a guide to explain the manual. I quickly realised that I then needed a tutor to explain the guide that explained the manual and also that this could go on ad infinitium. Phrases, either pithy or pathetic, were going to be hard to come by and I began to understand why so many computers were abandoned, sold, given to children as toys, consigned to attics and lofts or ended in the pages of EXCHANGE & MART. I offered a silent, desperate prayer for relief, if not by the cavalry at least a St. Bernard with a large brandy barrel.

THE marines arrived in the unlikely form of my younger grandson just as I was about to erase his father's name from my Christmas card list and he proved to be to a computer what Stephen Hendry is to a snooker-table. It seemed strange, but entirely without embarrassment or humiliation, to be taught by one so much younger than myself until I reflected that it was an evolutionary process; after all, I, at a very early age, had helped my own semi-literate grandfather to read his daily newspaper and will not my mentor himself one day perhaps be instructed by his grandson (terrorists, tyrants, politicians, pestilence and plague permitting) in the mystiques of agirobotics, the vagaries of something as yet undreamt? (If you think this may be too much of L6643 I suggest that you consider again the lyrics of BR20161). So, as I was led gently by my young Sherpa through the foothills of the mountain I had to climb I learned that the mystique is false and that the mountain was but an incline. Most of the difficulties and anxieties experienced by the computer tyro are the direct result of manufacturers caring little whether or not their products are properly understood. They may even find a sadistic satisfaction in inducing a white-knuckle response while having no regard at all for the masochistic harm that is caused to the industry in the long term. Shrouding itself in protective teminology and close fraternity whizz-words that seek, like all jargon, to exclude the uninitiated and illusion is fostered that only whizz kids can survive.

Now to the nub: "But what," you may be asking, "has all this to do with Bing Crosby?"

Editor: Well, we know that all Fred was contemplating was his proposed supplement to his monumental film book! And the best means of producing it.....

Produce it he has, as we announced in the previous issue of BING. A most interesting and useful addendum to ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD, consisting of further information that has come to Fred's knowledge.

NB: You notice Fred threw in a little puzzle for good measure? For L6643 above read A FLIGHT OF FANCY. Regarding BR20161 I humbly await someone to tell me what THAT stands for !

And Fred's passing reference to television's popular cliches was opportune for they have been much exercising my mind of late. You notice what devastating power TV has and creates - actually creates - fashions in speech! Its difficult to listen/watch an interview these days without one of the participants saying: "At the end of the day..." (meaning 'finally'), and "At this point in time.." (Now!), Then there's "Hang about..." meaning "Hold on a moment," or "Arf a mo'!" But the really choice 'in' cliche is: "Get your act together!" I evem heard a weather forecaster(the one that laughed off a viewer's warning of a hurricane last October) say: ".if this depression gets its act together...!" A football commentator wanted the England defence to - yes, get its act together!!"

SONGSMITH SUPREME

MAGICAL, MARVELLOUS, BERLIN

A RARE MAN reaches a rare milestone. The genius that is Irving Berlin has been widely commemorated on his other achievement - reaching 100 years of age. It may be argued that reaching old age, especially the century, is a matter of luck. You cannot do much about it if you are struck down with a deadly disease, whatever your age. But his genius in the other direction of songwriting was most certainly not based on luck - any more than was Bing Crosby's fabulous career. Indeed, KEN BARNES, writing many years ago for the BING SINGS BERLIN album in THE VERY BEST OF BING collection (Record 5) and some years before his tie-up with Bing in person, said:

> "The voice of Bing Crosby and the songs of Irving Berlin is the most natural of combinations..possibly the finest, and certainly the most commercially successful combination of talents since the invention of recorded sound."

No eulogy can be too fulsome for Irving Berlin; the man has - like Bing - created millions of memories for millions of people. The songwriter of the century who has so enriched the world. There have been - and are - other fine composers. Some have written songs that deserve to be called "classic" but no other has attained the sheerly prolific output of Berlin sustained over such a long period and maintaining such a uniquely high standard. It is doubtful if a complete list of his songs (and except for the first two or three Berlin wrote the words AND the lyrics) exists except possibly with the man himself. And among the thousands there were very, very few which might even remotely be called "failures".

The event of his 100th birthday has been well marked both on radio and TV as well as the press. On TV easily the best tributes consisted of the Crosby films HOLIDAY INN and BLUE SKIES, plus the Astaire/Garland EASTER PARADE. Just as well, for a programme we caught - OMNIBUS - was pathetic. More like a village hall performance. Nothing wrong with such performances in their setting but hardly national entertainment. We heard another on the radio, compered by Benny Green (not our favourite compere) and when a character by the name of Georgie Fame 'sang' LAZY, we wearily turned off.....

But how wondrous it is to contemplate that this Russian emigre, born in May 1888, began his momentous career before World War I - his first big hit of course being ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND, and that by 1917 he already had songs such as WHAT'LL I DO? - ALL ALONE - RUSSIAN LULLABY - WHEN THE MIDNIGHT CHOO-CHOO LEAVES FOR ALABAM - WHEN I LOST YOU - WHEN I LEAVE THE WORLD BEHIND - EVERYBODY'S DOING IT - PLAY A SIMPLE MELODY and many others. Hits in a world without radio, gramophones experimental, sound films well into the future, and television barely a dream in the inventors' minds. Success of a song then was measured by its sales of sheet music, the age when people did to a much larger extent than today, make their own music. One might say a song had to have merit in those days because people couldn't be brain-washed into liking it as they so often are nowadays.

But when those new inventions did come along, Irving Berlin found it so easy to widen his field. He has a remarkable list of show tunes, film tunes, and the radio came along, with its melodious exponents, to truly make him a world

figure in the world of popular music. Radio, in passing, might be said to have been of far more assistance to songwriters than television has proved to be. Radio is entirely aural, of course, while with TV the accent, main attention, is on the visual.

BLUE SKIES was probably the most comprehensive showcase of Irving Berlin's compositions, containing as it does more than a score. But consider the following 'standards' and consider too that they merely scratch the surface of the world of Irving Berlin's songwriting inspirations:

MARIE	NO STRINGS
PUTTIN' ON THE RITZ	TOP HAT, WHITE TIE AND TAILS
LET ME SING AND I'M HAPPY	LET YOURSELF GO
ME	LET'S FACE THE MUSIC AND DANCE
SOFT LIGHTS & SWEET MUSIC	WE SAW THE SEA
SAY IT ISN'T SO	A PRETTY GIRL IS LIKE A MELODY
HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN	THIS YEAR'S KISSES
HEAT WAVE	GIRL ON THE POLICE GAZETTE
EASTER PARADE	CHANGE PARTNERS
HOW'S CHANCES	NOW IT CAN BE TOLD
CHEEK TO CHEEK	ITS A LOVELY DAY TOMORROW
ISN'T THIS A LOVELY DAY	LET'S START THE NEW YEAR RIGHT
THE PICCOLINO	ALWAYS
I'LL SEE YOU IN C U B A	MANDY
BLUE SKIES	SOME SUNNY DAY
SAY IT WITH MUSIC	BE CAREFUL, ITS MY HEART
THE SONG IS ENDED	

and on and on - without even mentioning W - - - - C - - - - - - - - !

There appears to be no Berlin composition of note since the mid-50s, more than 30 years ago. Came the revolution, it might be said, when so many things in the world of popular music changed so drastically if not dramatically. Good songs continue to surface from time to time these days but songwriting of the style and calibre of Irving Berlin seems, largely, to have disappeared. Much the same might be said of the Gershwins, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern and others who made such massive contributions to the "golden age". The 30s, with some leeway back into the 20s and forward into the 40s, are now almost generally accepted as that age. So many songs written in that period form today's 'standards' - songs which can always be heard where really worthwhile popular music is played.

And it might fairly be said that the great IRVING BERLIN made the biggest and most worthwhile contribution of all. Truly a great man reached a great age - and richly deserved the homage paid him. Bing and Irving: between them they produced some wonderful things...and enriched the century beyond measure.....

THE MANY FRIENDS OF RENEE CHESTER will be delighted - possibly relieved! - to know that her sojourn in Tenerife is over and she, with her husband Dennis, is back home in England - presently to be contacted at 41 Blandford Waye, Hayes, Midd'x, UB4 OPA (Tel: 01-848-8441). The Chesters will, however, shortly be taking up residence at Eastwood, a few miles from Nottingham. Many will recall Renee's unhappy experiences in the States a few years back; ill-fortune as regards health continued to plague her in Tenerife and prompted the return. On a happier note, Renee has agreed with LARRY KINER to handle the FIVE NEW SPOKANE RECORDS of Bing he is producing and these should be ready by the end of July. Price of the albums, INCLUDING postage, will be approximately £6.50 to £7 dep dent on any Customs duty involved. (Spokanes 28-31 inclusive) Renee will be delighted to hear from friends at the address given, pending the new one, which will be notified. And let her know about the Spokanes.....

Similarly, the many enquirers after BERT BISHOP, our erstwhile record reviewer, may like to know that his address is roughly the same, viz

Tideway, 100 Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, Chelmsford,

Essex, CM3 6AJ (Phone: Maldon (0621) 742 144)

For some years Bert more or less 'retired' from the scene, not because of any loss of interest but due solely to intense preoccupation with his house, demolition thereof, and subsequent rebuilding. But now Bert is warmly returning and is delighted to renew confact with old friends.

NORTH-EAST TRIBUTE TO BING

reported by PHIL MORGAN (Jesmond,Newcastle)

IN a beautiful Spring evening the 1988 social season in the North-East got under way with a TRIBUTE TO BING, held at the Swallow Hotel, Gateshead (formerly The Five Bridges Hotel), on Friday, 6th May.

Upwards of 40 people attended and were warmly welcomed by the organiser, JOHN JOYCE in his usual genial fashion. It always gives us great satisfaction to see so many of our friends who come from far afield to these gatherings. This time they included Dennis and Jean Saville from London, John and Nancy Stonehouse from Lincoln; Frank and Hazel Kelly from South Benfleet in Essex, Ron and Mrs. Pearson from Southend, also in Essex, Matt and Jean Sprott with their daughter Janice from Lanarkshire in Scotland, and Bill Huntington and John Weir from Morecambe.

> And I feel I must certainly mention a young Sikh friend of mine, Kawrash, 17 years of age and attending his first Bing event of any kind. Kawrash 'discovered' Bing in a rather roundabout way; he is very much a fan of Fats Waller from whom he moved on to other pianists, notably Buddy Cole and from there it was a natural step to Bing. He thoroughly enjoyed the evening and is now a firm admirer of Bing.
> One more example proving that not all the youugsters are going down the road of "heavy metal" and whatever else seems to pass for music with the younger generation these days.

Referring back to the number of visitors from afar, I should make mention of the service offered by the hotel management which provided bed and breakfast for the ICC members attending at less than half their normal charge. A splendid gesture.

An apology for absence from normally regular visitor MICHAEL CRAMPTON, the Leeds organiser, was received. He was unable to attend, alas, because of the illness of his young son. We all hope the lad is now fully recovered.

It must be explained also that the evening was to an extent marred when, at the end of his opening remarks, John Joyce told us of the death of BOB JONES of Jarrow who had died suddenly the previous week. Bob had been a leading figure in the ICC and will be greatly missed.

The evening really started with the showing of a compilation of songs from Bing's films on video - big screen, loaned free of charge, incidentally, by Visicom of South Shore Road, Gateshead to whom we express our thanks. These "video collections are a great delight and invariably produce something 'new' for everyone. Apart from which running a film through complete, while perhaps desirable in some cases, uses up a tremendous slice of the time available.

> The meal was the usual "specialty" of the house - steak and kidney pie with several vegetables, all rounded off with the traditional gateaux and coffee.

THERE was a delightful bonus this time in that everyone present received a souvenir folder containing a set of prints of Bing executed on varied coloured backgrounds. It made a really excellent souvenir - just another gesture by ever-thoughtful John Joyce.who provided them.

> Quizzes are always popular at our events and this year's comprised the middle sections of popular Crosby songs with everyone being required to name the song on this basis. There were three winners each scoring eight ouf of ten.

More video, more quizzes, the way we like to round off the evening; it finished around midnight and it was plain that "a good time had been had by all"! Another highly enjoyable Bing event, capably organised by John Joyce undertaking what is a lot of hard work to make it so. And to him the thanks of us all.

NOW BOB IS 85!

WITH the 100th birthday of Irving Berlin, closely followed by the 85th of Bing's sparring partner, BOB HOPE, there is cause for some of us to cast an uneasy glance behind us at the accelerating passage of the years'.

It is not without significance that whenever one of the legendary figures of the entertainment world reaches a landmark - or death - Bing seems to be inevitably involved. The passing of Fred Astaire brought us the film tributes with Bing - now we've had ROAD TO BALI marking Bob's longevity. No doubt there will be more to follow. Remarkable to recollect that it was about 20 years ago that there were somewhat alarming reports of Bob experiencing a thrombosis behind the eye and the darkest thoughts were entertained. Now, he is a reasonably robust 85. Long may he continue to chalk up the birthdays.

> Always when we see a ROAD film we are astonished to note wisecracks we had either forgotten, or even missed, on previous viewings! Which is another reason why they are so well worth watching again - and again.

THE STAR MAKER shown as already stated around the time the March BING reached you was, and is, memorable for the great songs in it - a pre-War film, though only just. GO FLY A KITE, A MAN AND HIS DREAM, IN MY MERRY OLDSMOBILE, and the song made so memorable by the recording with Connee Boswell, AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER. One of Bing's best films for pure melody surely? The baleful Ned Sparks too is so well-remembered...

Then on 21st May we had GOING MY WAY though only on S4C which is purely a Welsh channel - we think! So, one way and another the maestro continues

to adorn the TV screens with pleasing regularity, especially as Bing often crops up in documentaries and similar programmes. Seems the gramophone is a 100 years old according to a programme seen on BBC1 at the end of May. It was mildly interesting but really didn't seem to get to grips with what is a fascinating subject. Predictably, it told of the invention of the electric cutting machines and microphones (previously artists sang or played into a large conical horn!) and of how artists such as Bing used the microphone to project their style of singing.

However, mention of GOING MY WAY leads us naturally to:

COMMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMPS

THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY many will recall - indeed, many here joined in with letters too - have been pressing hard for the US postal authorities to issue a stamp commemorating Bing's career. This would seem to be a simple, yet telling, way of paying tribute to those who have made unique and distinctive contributions to a nation's way of life and, in fact, its prestige. A committee apparently deliberates on just who should be so selected. Bing's name was put on the agenda for consideration though it is somewhat puzzling that it should NEED such consideration; what Bing did as an ambassador for goodwill towards America with his films, records, and personality is legendary. However, no doubt it is necessary for a committee to consider these candidates and separate the wheat from the chaff.

> Oddly, when this authority was changed as regards personnel, Bing's name was actually removed from the list! It has now been restored, however,

The position is that a nomineee for stamp recognition has to be dead for ten years before there is any consideration. The Presley society was quick to nominate their idol to the committee last year but we have seen a report which states that the committee did not consider Presley's artistic activities and career did not fall within the scope of the committee's terms of reference.

> So, however the US committee goes about its deliberations seems cloaked in secrecy and possibly mystery. The Irish postal authorities - that is Eire, the Republic of Ireland - did not dilly-dally. They have issued a stamp commemorating that splendid character actor, BARRY FITZGERALD, 1888 - 1961. Well-deserved recognition, for apart from his sterling work with Bing in GOING MY WAY and WELCOME STRANGER he added lustre to scores of other films.

The stamp has a miniature picture of Barry dressed in what appears to be the costume he wore as the "marriage broker" in the John Wayne/Victor McLaglen film, THE QUIET MAN. This has been shewn several times on various TV channels in the last few years - it features, most will know, a tremendous "fight" between the two leading stars and is most decoratively adorned by the beautiful colleen, Maureen O'Hara. Our good friend Michael O'Toole with a couple of others supplied us with the stamp.

Must confess we weren't aware that Barry Fitsgerald died as long ago as 1961.

ABOVE is another of those fascinating and historical illustrations from the very early days of Bing's career - after he'd had stopped larking around with The Rhythm Boys; This, and the one facing page 10, is from

(Cont.on page 22

PBS remembers the man called 'the Groaner'

The career of Bing Crosby reprised

By Ernie Santosuosso
Globe Staff

He was born Harry Lillis Crosby in Tacoma, Wash., and reportedly assumed the nickname, Bing, after a character in a comic strip. Later, fans were to affectionately dub him "The Groaner" and German soldiers, hearing his broadcasts during World War II, referred to him as "Der Bingle."

For more than 50 years, Bing Crosby's durable baritone and motion picture, radio and television career cast him into an easily identifiable part of Americana. He laced popular songs with "*boo-boo-boo-boo*," whistled his theme, "When the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day," danced with Fred Astaire, conned Bob Hope in seven "Road" movies and warmed the nation's hearths with his family Christmas TV specials that became a tradition.

Crosby was 74 when he died on a golf course in Spain in 1977. His songs survive him, especially at this time of the year when reruns are shown of "Holiday Inn" (1942) in which he introduced Irving Berlin's nostalgic classic, "White Christmas."

The life and career of the world's best-known crooner will be recalled in a 90-minute tribute, "Remembering Bing," to be telecast over WGBH-TV, Ch. 2, tonight at 8 p.m. and tomorrow at 4 p.m.

Produced by WTTW/Chicago, "Remembering Bing" opens as Crosby is heard singing, "Going Hollywood" (1933), one of 27 songs included in the special. Clips from more than 40 of his films are also incorporated. Host Dorothy Lamour, co-star with Bing in many of his Paramount films, notes that his voice has been heard more than any other "in the history of time."

He couldn't read music, but nevertheless played drums in high school and in 1925 decided to embark upon a show business career. As one-third of the Rhythm Boys that included Harry Barris and Al Rinker, he was hired by orchestra leader Paul Whiteman. Rare footage of Crosby singing in a 1929 Douglas Fairbanks movie is included. Bing, who was

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PBS recalls the legend that was Bing Crosby

■ CROSBY
Continued from Page 22

to become one of the film colony's wealthiest persons, was paid $100 for that role.

In addition to Lamour, a number of Hollywood and music personalities offer reminiscences of Crosby – Mel Torme, Anthony Quinn, Patti Andrews, Victor Borge, Rhonda Fleming, Phil Harris, Bob Hope, Mary Martin, Donald O'Connor, Rich Little, record producer Ken Barnes and screenwriter Norman Panama.

Conspicuously absent from the program is any mention of the singer's two wives, the late Dixie Lee Crosby and Kathryn Grant Crosby, and his offspring from both marriages. Only brother Bob, who contributes a brief observation, takes part in this salute.

Bing Crosby's early films were mainly fun and fluff. In 1931, he signed to star in six Mack Sennett shorts, characterized by their lightweight scripts and bevies of "bathing beauties." Meanwhile, America tuned in to his nightly 15-minute CBS broadcasts for Creamo Cigars. He eventually made his major motion picture breakthrough in "The Big Broadcast" (1932) in which he sang "Please."

Torme credits much of Bing's early success to the prolific song-writing team of Leo Robbin and Ralph Rainger and says that the use of "*boo-boo-boo-boo*" was an expression of Crosby's desire to become more commercially acceptable. Mary Martin cites Crosby's "easy rhythm" and Kitty

Crosby in a scene typical of his Christmas TV specials.

Carlisle, another co-star, confesses: "I always felt it was Bing Crosby and all the other singers."

Analyzing his easygoing singing style, Martin observes that he came "in from underneath and not on top of it [the song]." Over the years, as he developed into a surprisingly good actor, Crosby films show him melodically romancing on screen many of Hollywood's beautiful actresses: Lamour, Carlisle, Martin, Fleming, Joan Bennett, Jane Wyman, Ingrid Bergman and Grace Kelly. There are memorable duets with Hope, Astaire, O'Connor, Perry Como, Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra; a lip-synch routine with Danny Kaye, and the 1943 collaboration of Crosby and the Andrews Sisters on "Pistol Packin' Mama." His tandem vocal on "September Song" with Sinatra on the latter's TV show is a collector's-item performance.

Crosby won a best-actor Academy Award for his role as a priest in "Going My Way" – an unforgettably touching scene captures Crosby as Fr. O'Malley singing "Toora-Loora-Loo-Ra" to an ailing pastor, portrayed by Barry Fitzgerald, who received a Best Supporting Actor Academy Award. The singer was equally effective as the guilt-ridden actor, Frank Elgin, in "Country Girl" in which Grace Kelly was awarded an Oscar. Yet he considered "High Society," a much less substantial vehicle, co-starring Sinatra and Kelly, his favorite of all Crosby movies.

Reappearing later in the tribute, Torme appraises Crosby as "one of the two or three greatest stars. But his personal attitude was one of absolute regular feller."

Lamour also discloses that the Mack Sennett comedies in 1932 marked the last time Crosby took single-star billing.

"He always insisted co-stars have equal billing, even if they were newcomers," says Lamour.

Crosby died on the 17th green of a golf course in Spain. This warmly wonderful retrospective concludes in a sweetly poignant fashion as Bing Crosby sings, "Once in Awhile," in a voice virtually intact despite the years.

He had recorded the song only three days before his death.

(Cont. from page 19)

the series researched and located for us by JEAN PAUL FRERERAULT of Quebec. They graphically illustrate the fashion in which Bing was being projected, indeed, lionised in America and especially New York. You can see the datte - December 1932 - hoardings, billboards, newspaper spreads and the like.

> This was the Capitol cinema on Broadway instead of the Paramount. The film has a still-familiar look, featuring the sinister FU MANCHU! And this was cine-variety of the top flight. But there is an extra special historical significance in this particular advertisement for it must be the occasion when Bing met for the first time the man destined to be his 'sparring-partner' in a legendary film series and countless radio shows - BOB HOPE!

Note again, this features the Capitol: Bing wrote in CALL ME LUCKY:

> "When I came back to New York from Hollywood (where he had been making the film, THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1932) I took an engagement at the Capitol Theater. It was there that I met Bob Hope, who was on the same bill. At that juncture, Hope and I hadn't begun to bully each other. That was to come later."

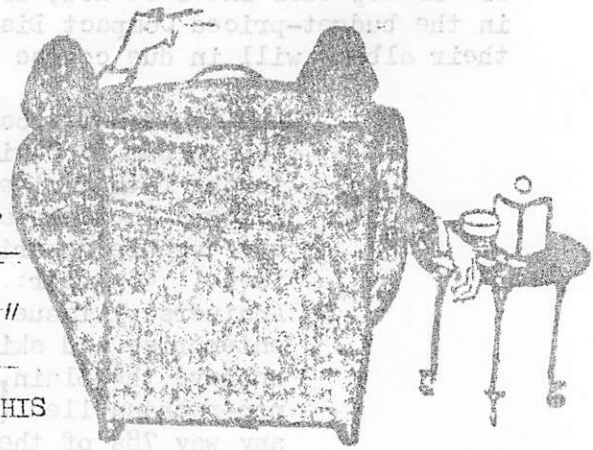
We know what happened to Bing and Bob in later years, and Abe Lyman was a famous radio and recording bandleader - but the other artists on the bill seem to have been lost in the mists of time. We are indebted to Jean Paul.....

So, BBC TV -2 are giving the Phil Silvers SERGEANT BILKO show yet another run! And as Barry Norman would say: Why not! One gets the feeling that if these riotous shows were seen a hundred times they would still be funny; truly they are classics of comedy. And June 3rd brought the episode where Bing was 'featured' throughout tho' only appearing for perhaps half a minute at the end ! Phil Silvers was a fabulous comedian - perhaps all of our members do not know that at one time he was the "warm-up" artist for the Kraft Music Hall (Crosby) shows?

Our nearest Woolworths (can't say local because we lost ours a couple of years ago when so many other towns did in that big- shake-up and modernisation that Woolworths undertook) has been displaying a notice to the effect that they are not stocking EMI products (records/cassettes/CDs) because they - Woolworths - are not prepared to pass on what they consider unreasonable price increases. Well done, Woollies - but happily, EMI are not prominent in the Crosby reissue field.

On the previous two pages there is another review of the TV tribute to Bing made by the Chicago company, WTTW. And yes, the picture is the same as on the coger! We liked it so much we thought it would be an adornment on the front too! Its interesting that the comment is made to the effect that this show, REMEMBERING BING, concentrates solely on his career and not on his family andprivate life. Which surely is how it should be ? Unfortunately, there is no news that the programme will be seen here on neither BBC nor ITV. Perhaps they haven't been 'offered' the show.

Records



AND THESE DAYS, DISCS - COMPACT VARIETY !

New issues for our continuing enjoyment....

"EASY TO REMEMBER"

BING CROSBY: (1931-1936) INCLUDING SOME OF HIS RARER RECORDINGS

Saville SVL 190 Price: £3.99 or thereabouts.

track EVENTS

No sooner had the last (March) issue been prepared for posting than we were - happily - confronted with this album, probably one of the most interesting and exciting we've had for some time. Life is like that - for in the same fashion the film THE STARMAKER was also screened on TV while we were virtually on our way to the Post Office!

Which means most members will have had this album for three months; at least, they should have and we certainly hope they have for it is a truly splendid collection. Twenty marvellous tracks from the truly halcyon period of Bing's career; true greater things came to him in the way of films and radio but here are the records of that young, vibrant, completely innovative, young singer who captured the world - and held it, for that matter.

Here are twenty songs of true melody; years before the monotonous "beat" became the only attribute, it seems. These songs have melody, they have rhythm where required - and by goodness, they have Bing Crosby to sing them in a style the world had not heard before. They also had lyrics, if sometimes a little lachrymose, they at least told a story and offered thoughts and ideas; a far cry from the many one-line 'lyrics' of today - tho' in deference to younger members, we do appreciate that there are some good songs written today! Alas, they are not in the majority. But when they did writes good songs in this day and age, Bing was still around to sing SEND IN THE CLOWNS, THE WAY WE WERE, BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES and so on.

SAVILLE is a label of the 'independents', in this case Conifer Records, and have issued a vast number of nostalgia albums in the past few years, notably British dance bands. As far as can be seen this is their first issue of a Crosby album; the transfers are excellent and the overall quality as regards sound excellent. Actually, this album is from the same era of Bing's career as the songs on BLACK MOONLIGHT, issued on JOY "D"295, Joy records

being an issue by President Records, another large independent company doing a similar job to Conifer. Regarding the latter, their issues are of especial interest now, for as we have reported, Conifer are now in the budget-priced Compact Disc field, so that it is not unlikely that their albums will in due course be issued in that form.

> And it is not, possibly, untoward to suggest this album by Saville is something of a contrast to the 10th Anniversary Set which has so convulsed members in the past six months or so! Indeed, it may even be described as the anthithisis of that issue! Consider: whatever is felt about the Anniversary issue in the way of admiration for enterprise and skill, it WAS contrived. Here we have the plain, unvarnished, un-digitalised, non-rechannelled (for stereo), non-enhanced in any way 78s of the period, mono, beautifully engineered by the noted sound expert, John Wadley. And this will please a lot of people without really detracting from the "set".

Although this album from Saville is, as we have said, from the same era as BLACK MOONLIGBT, happily, and perhaps miraculously, there is only one duplication - OUT OF NOWHERE. However, it is remiss of us to have got this far and still leave those who don't have the album already in the dark as to titles. The sleeve is an attractive gold/green affair, with the well-known picture of the thirties Bing at the microphone, addressing a microphone of the period and with his hands elegantly assisting in the expression of the song, whatever it was! The picture is in black and white against the coloured background given. Sleeve notes are informed and comprehensive by that noted record researcher, BRIAN RUST. And the sleeve also gives full information on the titles as follows:

Side One:

1. Out of nowhere	30.3.31	Studio orchestra.
2. Now that you're gone	1.10.31	Victor Young & Orch.
3. Love, you funny thing!	23.2.32	Studio orchestra.
4. You're still in my heart	15.3.32	Studio orchestra.
5. Let's try again.	24.4.32	Isham Jones & Orch.
6. I'm playing with fire	9.1.33	Studio orchestra.
7. What do I care, its home!	9.2.33	Studio orchestra.
8. I've got to pass your house to get to my house	9.6.33	Jimmy Grier & Orch.
9. I would if I could but I can't	13.6.33	Jimmy Grier & Orch.
10. Let's spend at evening at home	11.12.33	Lennie Hayton & Orch.

Side two:

1. I'm hummin', I'm whistlin', I'm singin'	5.7.34	Irving Aaronson & Commanders
2. Someday, sweetheart	8.8.34	Georgie Stoll & Orch.
3. Two cigarettes in the dark	5.10.34	Georgie Stoll & Orch.
4. Its easy to remember	21.2.35	Georgie Stoll & Orch.
5. My heart and I	13.11.35	Georgie Stoll & Orch.
6. Moonburn	13.11.35	Georgie Stoll's instrumental trio.
7. Lovely lady.	24.3.36	Victor Young & Orch.

(Cont. over.....

8. Let's call a heart a heart	29.7.36	Georgie Stoll & Orch.
9. South Sea Island magic	4.8.38	Dick McIntyre & Harmony Hawaiians.
10. I never realised.	10.8.36	Victor Young & Orch.

A splendid, melodious, ever-interesting compilation. And the notation on the sleeve 'Including some of his rarer recordings' is certainly substantiated, as well as a lot of lesser-issued tracks. I NEVER REALISED will be a special delight for this IS rare indeed; a Cole Porter song.

> Full of interest? Listen to Bing singing the verse (as he so often did on his earlier records) to PLAYING WITH FIRE. He uses a phrase there that is either straight from Bix Beiderbecke, or certainly inspired by the legendary trumpet player, such a friend of Bing's in the Whiteman days. Thus:
>
> "...and from the things I hear,
> I should be sorry de-ee-ee-aa--rr " in a beautiful, musically descending phrase.

LET'S TRY AGAIN - what a lovely song this is! Plenty of la-de-dee's &c. as indeed there are throughout this album of delight.

SOMEDAY, SWEETHEART Brian Rust describes as one of Bing's finest jazz performances; we wouldn't argue with that view.

> You will note a fair smattering of Bing's film songs, and especially delightful is the legendary Rodgers & Hart composition for MISSISSIPPI. MY HEART AND I, too, is a particularly haunting song.

A wonderful collection, we repeat. With the great sound of the bands of the 30s, too! This needs no embellishment, no modernisation, no echo, for enhancement of any kind is impossible - with the possible exception of putting it all on COMPACT DISC ! Enhancement that may be, but not artificial - merely taking us into the 1930s studio with Bing!

Conifer (Saville) told us in correspondence a year or so ago that they do not run a mail-order service, but that all their records can be ordered thro' a good record shop.

WITH THE "HERE LIES LOVE" ALBUM (Living Era AJA 5043) added to the Saville and Joy records all issued with the last couple of years, we have done pretty well on early 30s material. And its material more than half-a-century old !

This is the only LP album that has, so far, come to our notice for this issue. Should any further turn up we will naturally deal with them. Meanwhile, we can turn our attention to those other discs which are, in some quarters, causing some heartache, not to mention annoyance ! We have read authoritative statements and articles which freely state that the days of the micro-groove LP as we know it are numbered. That within comparatively few years, if that long, they will disappear completely, being replace by.....

COMPACT DISCS

IT IS abundantly clear that it is going to be no mean task to keep abreast of compact disc issues; it is going to need a fair degree of co-Operation from members. Unlike albums they do not appear to be issued in any coherent pattern. Certain discs turn up in one shop but are never seen in others and, of course, vice-versa. In fact they seem to be coming in from all directions! We learn, too, that a CD costs less than £1 to produce!! Clearly the price of them is going to fall to staggering low levels - already there is plenty of evidence of this. The little silver disc, as some are calling it, really is set to completely oust the LP, whether we like it or not. This particular writer is wholeheartedly for the disc - quite superb reproduction.

> We mentioned they come from all directions - West Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy - and of particular interest, what of this!

BING & LOUIS:	Bing Crosby & Louis Armstrong:	COMPACT DISC:	SPECTRUM U4016
PRICE: £2.99.	Playing time:		

Yes, you read it correctly, £2.99. And this disc was, according to its jacket, made in Australia! Distributed in the UK, it continues, by MSD Distribution Ltd., 3 Standard Rd., Park Royal, London, NW10 6EX

The front of the (plastic) container has a nice picture in colour of Bing and Louis taken from HIGH SOCIETY. At first glance the contents would appear to be that of HAVIN' FUN, the Jasmine LPs issued a year or two back. And some of it is, but only some of it. There are twelve tracks, and Bing is featured on:

> LAZY RIVER, LAZY BONES, MY HONEY'S LOVIN' ARMS
> and a second version of LAZY BONES.

Not having seen the MORE FUN issue we cannot be sure, but it does seem that MY HONEY'S LOVIN' ARMS is new; Bing when announcing the song mentions that he recorded it with the Mills Brothers 'years ago'. And he did, of course. The rest of the disc is entertaining with Louis, Jack Teagarden, Joe Venuti and other jazz giants. Needless to say it is all 50s radio material and it is a matter for consideration whether this sort of stuff justifies issued on Compact Disc. I happen to think it doesn't. The quality is good, far better than the Jasmine LPs but even so is hardly up to normal CD standards. But consider also: this CD was made in Australia yet can be sold on this side of the world for £2.99p! It is rather mind-boggling in its implications.

AS if, almost, to highlight the dilemma, if not the frustrations that have to be faced if and when you enter the Compact Disc field, are the next two CDs to be commented upon. Most of us have, in the past couple of years, purchased the four volumes of THE RADIO YEARS - and been well pleased with them, too, for the quality is excellent. It was said this radio material actually came from Bing's own collection and was, therefore, presumed to be what might be termed "first generation" tapes, i.e. they hadn't been dubbed over and over ad lib, slightly reducing the quality each time.

Now the complete contents of the four volumes on LP have been issued on two Compact Discs as follows:

BING CROSBY - THE RADIO YEARS

20 SONGS:

GNP CRESCENDO GNPD-9051

With ROSEMARY CLOONEY, THE ANDREWS SISTERS, HELEN O'CONNELL, LAUREEN BACALL, DICK POWELL AND GARY CROSBY.

You know that four colours were used to differentiate the four LPs, i.e. Blue, Red, Green, and very Dark Blue, with a rather jaunty picture of Bing in soft hat, polka-dot bow-tie - and pipe. For this first of the CDs the picture is the same, tho' of course reduced in size, and given the new colour-background of purple. Although the titles are as per the four LPs for the sake of posterity and members' convenience we list them here. As you know, compact discs are single-sided:

1. Singin' in the rain 17.2.54
2. Young at heart 10.3.54
3. I can dream, can't I? 26.1.50 with The Andrews Sisters
4. Valencia. 18.10.53
5. You belong to me 30.11.52
6. Wish you were her 30.11.52
7. Moonlight Bay 11. 4.51 with Gary Crosby
8. Don't let the stars get in your eyes 24.1.53
9. That's a'plenty 6.9.52 With Connee Boswell & The Dixieland Boys
10. Answer me, my love 24.2.54
11. I don't know why 27.2.52 With Laureen Bacall
12. Stranger in Paradise 3.1.54
13. Lullaby of Broadway 8.11.50 With Dick Powell
14. Where is your heart? 22.11.53
15. Surrey with the fringe on top 24.1.54 With Helen O'Connell
16. You go to my head 13.5.53
17. Lady of Spain 13.4.53
18. Two to tango 23.11.53
19. PS I love you 4.10.53
20. Till we meet again 6. 2.52 With Patti Page.

This works out at about 50 minutes playing time.

On the previous page we omitted the playing time of the Bing/Louis CD: it is 37 mins.

Oddly, the two discs are not designated Vols 1 and 2: the second disc is number GNP CRESCENDO GNPD 9052; its background colour is a richer green, slightly darker than that on Vol 3 of the LPs. It is notated thus:

with
JUDY GARLAND, NAT 'KING' COLE, PEGGY LEE, MAURICE CHEVALIER, DENNIS DAY, JIMMY DURANTE, THE MILLS BROS. BOB HOPE, BURL IVES KAY THOMPSON AND THE WILLIAMS BROS., RUDY VALLEE, GEORGE BURNS, THE ANDREWS SISTERS.

As with the LPs, this listing of such an array of guest artists is not only testament to the popularity of Bing's radio shows, even in the 50s, but no doubt designed to enlist the support of the fans of these artists. Titles are given overleaf:

BING CROSBY: THE RADIO YEARS: CRESCENDO GNPD 9052

1. Hello, Hello With Kay Thompson & the Williams Bros.
2. Great day
3. On a slow boat to China. With Peggy Lee
4. That lucky old sun
5. If I knew you were coming I'd've baked a cake. With Bob Hope.
6. Zip a dee doo dah
7. On top of old Smokey With Burl Ives
8. Changing partners
9. Up a lazy river With the Mills Bros.
   Paper Doll " " " "
10. Its only a paper moon
11. Hand holdin' music With Walter O'Keefe & Rudy Vallee
12. Everbody loves my baby
13. You gotta start off each day with a song With Jimmy Durante
14. If this isn't love
15. Loise (sic) Louise With Maurice Chevalier
    Mimi
16. Vaya con Dios
17. It might as well be spring With George Burns
18. How are things in Glocca Morra?
19. For me and my gal With Judy Garland
20. The Jones Boy
21. The old lamplighter
    Its a good day
22. Cuanta le gusta With Peggy Lee
23. I got the sun in the morning
24. Clancy lowered the boom With Dennis Day
25. May the good Lord Bless and keep you With Nat King Cole and the Andrews Sisters.

The first disc proclaims 20 songs, and the second 25 but as you can see, Nos. 15 and 21 contain two songs so really there are 27 on the second disc.

If the sound on the LPs is excellent, on these CDs it is well-night unbelievable in its clarity, depth and all-round tone.

Still don't understand the inclusion of HELLO, HELLO for apart from announcing it, Bing takes no part in the number. You do hear the Williams Bros introducing themselve with Andy calling out last - before he started his successful solo career.

These are manufactured in America - GNP CRESCENDO RECORD CO. INC., 8400 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90069, the actual makers being LAZER VIDEO, INC. They do not appear to be on release here in the UK. The abbreviated 'jacket' note are, as on the LPs, by Pete Kline and Dave Dexter.

It will be noted that the tracks do not follow the sequence of the LPs; but all the titles are there.

As stated, these do not so far appear to be on release here but they can be obtained for £7.50 each, inclusive of postage/packing from:

DEREK C. PARKES, 66 FIRS RD., FIRSDOWN, SALISBURY, WILTS, SP5 1SW

At this rate, they are cheaper than the LPs!

This material has now been well-issued; it has appeared on the Murray Hill 4-album set as well as THE GOLDEN AGE OF AMERICAN RADIO but not in this quality.

Nine of the songs have also appeared on another Compact Disc, i.e. Intertape 500.027; there is an extra song, however, on this CD - 'OL' BUTTERMILK SKY which is another irritation for it means retention of this CD for the one item! This so often happened with LPs.....

> A lot of material is now being issued in three forms, e.g. LP, cassette and Compact Disc - witness the 10th Anniversary Set. But, already it is apparent that some material - not at the moment Bing's - is being issued on Compact Disc only. This surely is a solid pointer to the way things are going. You may think we are unduly pressing the case for CDs. Not so - we are merely endeavouring to keep you well in the picture as we learn it from various sources.

We omitted to give the total playing time of the 2nd disc above which is 61 minutes! And the dates are not given in this case either because they were not included on the jacket as they were on the first.

WITH CDs is removed what has always been a bugbear in reproducing sounds via records. We don't need to go back to cylinders (!) but a dwindling band of us remember the days when records - 78s of course - were played either on a leatherette-covered portable gramophone (non-electric, wir variety of course) or on a similar housed in a more ambitious wood cabinet! In each case, the record was savagely assaulted by a steel needle, of all things, held in a metal soundbox of quite enormous weight, especially with its tone-arm added.

> How records survived that sadistic treatment is a matter for wonderment. One had to change the needle with every side unless economy was called for and you played TWO sides with the one needle! They cost about 9d (just over 4p per box) and were designated LOUD, SOFT, or MEDIUM. Steel needles - and the records were, of course, made of shellac. So what were the most - shellac or steel?

We didn't hear, or know, too much about frequencies either in those days; one just realised that a particularly high note, or a particularly LOW note, produced unpleasant vibration via the soundbox; and the record very quickly showed signs of wear. One listened for these 'spots' with considerable apprehension. Vibraphone notes were especially vulnerable in this respect.

Even when the "clock-work" gramophone gave way to the electric radiogram, for some years steel needles continued in use. Its difficult now to imagine that records were subjected to the steel needle treatment.

Finally came the stylus; but that still involved a needle (of sorts) with the weight of the arm. And even when we went even further and reached the hi-fi stage, and cartridges became unbelievably light, there was still wear on the groove of the records. Records had changed from shellac to vinyl also in the process. We measured the weight of the cartridge/arm in grams.... we adjusted the "bias" - but still there was that wearing contact between a tip and the record's groove.

Now, nothing touches the CD; no stylus, no weight of cartridge/arm. Merely a

beam. And in this connection we can quote from an article of interest which recently appeared in an American newspaper:

> "One great attraction of CDs is their durability. As far as anyone can tell, a CD should last as long as human civilisation. That is why archival institutions like the Library of Congress are now transferring their most important documents to digital disks.
>
> The virtual immortality of these disks rests on the fact that all the recorded information (or music) is hermetically sealed beneath their glasslike surface, which is immune to age. Moreover, when the disk is played, nothing but the weightless light of a lazer touches the surface. There is no friction, abrasion, or wear, and the disk presumably stays as good as new, no matter how old it is or how much it is played."

Mention of the Library of Congress in the above excerpt reminds us to say - which we don't think we have before - that BING goes to the Library and is filed among the state archives.

THE EXPRESS AND STAR is, we understand, a widely-read newspapers in the West Midlands; no doubt many of our members read it. Never was the "cliche" "you can't believe all you read in the papers" more comprehensively substantiated than in a recent issue. Seems they run a feature on show business by one SUE TURNER and it deals with TV, films, radio &c. AND SUE is some reporter, too! In a recent issue - May 2nd to be precise - she wrote the preview of a tribute to Irving Berlin in the course of which she declared:

> "This week the BBC launches a musical tribute to the late Irving Berlin...."

Later on in the article she announced:

> "....other films lined up this week are HOLIDAY INN, in which Astaire sang the unforgettable WHITE CHRISTMAS....."

Miss Turner is - if we may be entirely colloquial - quite a lulu! Who supplies her data, we might well ask ! In all sincerity, we really would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to believe that anyone other than BING CROSBY ssng WHITE CHRISTMAS in HOLIDAY INN. But there you are, confounded we are! Well done Sue - you have earned some sort of recognition. Just what form it should take we can't make up our minds !

We trust members were not slow to correct dear Sue - and we wonder what her Editor felt ?

Seeing the astonishing performance Sue did with the show-biz page perhaps the Editor could try her out on the sports' page? Perhaps not: no doubt she might tell us Steve Davis scored the equalizer for Arsenal against the Harlequins at Lords ! Or something similar...

Our apologies to the non-sporting members who will not perhaps follow the above - but we did feel constrained to write to the Editor of the EXPRESS & STAR regarding the remarkable previews by Sue Turner. His reply was as follows:

Dear Mr. Bristo,

Sorry for the errors, you may be interested to know that the report of Berlin's death, obviously greatly exaggerated, was based on information in the Macmillan Directory of Biography, which says he died in 1979.

The reference to Fred Astaire instead of Bing Crosby was a straightforward human slip up.

Yours sincerely,
BARRY COX,
Features Editor.

EXPRESS & STAR,
Queen St.
Wolverhampton.

My my! Did you ever see such a bland,complacent 'explanation' for what were two errors monumental in their ~~idiocy~~? Imagine anyone needing to look up a biography directory regarding Irving Berlin. And "a straight-forard human slip up" for Fred instead of Bing. We COULD have further enlightened the Editor (and Sue Turner) with the fact that Bing's recording is the largest single-selling record, etc. etc., - and has sold in excess of 30-million copies where as, as far as we know, dear old Fred never sang WHITE CHRISTMAS at all! What world do these propagators of the news occupy ?

We gladly return to TRACK EVENTS afterthat diversion: having already mentioned DEREK PARKES (page 28) in connection with THE RADIO YEARS Compact Discs (which he is enterprisingly importing directly from the USA with other items) and given his address you may find the following of value, especially if you missed the items first time around:

The albums, BING IN THE 30s (JSP label) Vols 1, 2 and 3 £4.50 (each) (this is a very special offer); other albums are also available.

The book BING CROSBY, by TIMOTHY A MORGRETH: £24 - normal retail price is £30 book has 554 pages and contains:

(a) an excellent 78rpm discography.
(b) a filmography
(c) an abbreviated TV listing
(d) an excellently detailed listing of Bing's radio shows from 4 Jan 1928 to 30 May 1954.

THE CROSBY YEARS by Ken Barnes - 1 new copy £8.00
THE ONE AND ONLY BING by Bob Thomas - 1 new copy £8.00

All the above prices include postage &c. And Derek can provide much more! HE is particularly interested in Bing's radio shows and would appreciate hearing from anyone with a sinilar interest.

RESUMING 'TRACK EVENTS'

A report from a very reliable source gives us the astounding news that American Columbia (CBS) are to issue their catalogue of 1932-33-34 Bing recordings on Compact Discs. But, a sign of the times surely, there is no word that they will also be issued on album or cassette! The CD project is in the hands of Michael Brooks whom, it will be recalled, was behind the release of A BING CROSBY COLLECTION (CBS EMBASSY) some years back

Some of Bing's earlier recordings were, of course, release by both Columbia and Brunswick. And the CBS holdings for the years quoted are truly historic. Guess you'd best get a CD player after all !

"COUNTRY CROSBY" AXIS LABEL (Australia) Cat. AX 701369

Yes, Australian; now is the time for all good 'Cobbers' to come to the aid of their UK cousins! Here is a most attractive album which, as Leslie Gaylor commented, is a nice balance between the other Bing Western albums that have been issued. Titles are:

I'm and old cowhand
Take me back to my boots and saddle
Twilight on the trail.
Empty Saddles
Round-up lullaby
Silver on the sage
Along the Santa Fe trail
Mexicali Rose
When the bloom is on the sage
Tumbling tumbleweeds
The Singing Hills
Cool water
You are my sunshine
Deep in the heart of Texas

Fourteen attractive tracks; not particularly rare but for all that a very nice collection. And you note the 'modern' appellation COUNTRY CROSBY! Country & Western music is quite a big thing these days - with usually nice accompaniment but indifferent voices. Here it is good accompaniment with - a splendid voice, of course. Perhaps some independent label will take up the project - no use hoping for anything from MCA. From what we can gather, what passes for 'management' changes every other week. So, if you have an Australian contact..... after all, we watch NEIGHBOURS, COUNTRY PRACTICE &c!!

And mention of MCA brings us to a subject about which so many members have enquired. It will be recalled that to tie in with the 10th Anniversary of Bing's passing and parallel with the Ken Barnes project, John Marshall worked on MCA (successor to Ian McLay!) to issue a 3-album set. And being given the task of selecting a repertoire for the three records, John invited members to submit to him their suggestions for the contents. Alas, as you all know through no fault of John's the project failed to materialise and MCA allowed the anniversary to pass unnoticed.

Nevertheless, members have shewn a keen interest to know what WOULD have been on the set and thus learn what a consensus of opinion was regarding the tracks to be used.

John received a healthy response (including those lists largely indecipherable!); without wishing to push his own views or choices he nevertheless based his final submission to MCA on the premise that 60s and 70s material was fairly easily available and in any case prob boy in the possession of members and the lists bore this out. So, the concentration boiled down to just three decades, e.g. 30s, 40s and 50s. Incidentally, if your choice doesn't happen to be included bear the above in mind and also the fact that some of the titles chosen are not owned by MCA and thus invalid.

So, if you really want to know, here are the titles submitted:

The Moon was yellow
Swing low, sweet chariot
Now it can be told
When you're away
Ah! sweet mystery of life
Thine alone
Deep Purple
Cynthia
Tea for two
Pale Moon
Shepherds serenade
Mandy is two
Skylark
Blue shadows and white gardenias
Blues in the night
A boy in khaki, a girl in lace.
Hello Mom
Poinciana
Moonlight on a white picket fence
Save your sorrows for tomorrow
Lullaby (Jocelyn's Berceuse)
My heart goes crazy
So would I
Day by day
Rose of Santa Rosa
You do
Swinging down the lane
Love me or leave me
Everywhere you go
Mule train.
Chattanoogie show-shine boy
Looks like a cold, cold winter
You gotta show me
I whistle a happy tune
Shanghai
The moon came up with a great idea.
La mer
Jim, Johnny and Jonas
Gigi
If I were a bell.

Plenty to mull over there; plans hadn't progressed to how many tracks per album. Incidentally, despite the vehement assertions that albums with 10 tracks per side we received fairly recently were bound to be technically inferior, that number is rapidly becoming the norm now. However, among the tracks listed above are some great tracks and we would mention THINE ALONE, AH! SWEET MYSTERY OF LIFE, the LULLABY (Jocelyn) and others. And most of the rest have certainly not been over-reissued. Pity it all fell through; there's a couple of vivid war-time memories in HELLO MOM, and MANDY IS TWO.

An addendum from DEREK PARKES (address already given): PERSONALITIES ON PARADE is the name of a new Limited Edition LP record which is not devoted entirely to Bing but is, nevertheless, of considerable interest to the more serious collectors.

Volume I contains the out-take JUNE IN JANUARY from the film HERE IS MY HEART; this is not the version where Bing sings a duet with himself but a solo version with Nat Finston's Paramount Orchestra (1934 Sept). Further volumes will include other rare finds such as the complete CREMO RADIO SHOW of November 9, 1931 in which Bing sings NOW THAT YOU'RE GONE, THIS IS THE MISSUS (scat chorus) and GOODNIGHT SWEETHEART plus whistle. For additional information please send 26p in stamps to Derek.

TRADING POST

ENTRIES here are free for your wants in the way of records, cassettes, books, &c. but there is a nominal charge of £1 for non-Crosby items. Restrict your entries to a maximum of six lines; if lengthy lists are involved invite a SAE for further information. All entries are used in good faith with reliance on the integrity of members. It is up to them to decide whether or not they have entered into a fair transaction. We can take no responsibility.

J. R. BAKER, 17 Kendall Drive, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1LZ Surplus records - 78s, LPs and cassettes, for sale, mainly early and radio material. SAE for list. WANTED: IN A LITTLE SPANISH TOWN LAT8331, BING 'N' BASIE on CD (or a note of where it may still be found!)

MRS. B. PHILPOTT, 12 Roberts House, Upper Park Road, New Southgate, London, NL1:

(Mrs. Philpott is the widow of recently-deceased member Ron): Has about a score of Bing films on video, e.g. WE'RE NOT DRESSING/HOLIDAY INN/DIXIE/IF I HADMY WAY/ HERE COME THE WAVES/HIGH SOCIETY/HERE COMES THE GROOM/WELCOME STRANGER/RIDING HIGH CONNECTICUT YANKEE/BLUE SKIES/ROBIN & SEVEN HOODS/incl. DOWN MEMORY LANE (early Bing Shorts) SONGS FROM 44 FILMS/GONE WITH THE WIND Parts 1 and 2, BING SINGS 56 SONGS, ROAD TO MOROCCO. Any help greatly appreciated, all above for sale.

BRIAN JONES, 1 GELLIHAF RD., Fleur-de-Lis, Blackwood, Gwent, NP2 1RJ: FOR SALE! 29 Bing LPs at £2.00 eachplus 65 P & P. SAE for lists.

ALAN APPLETON, 5 Mill Lane Crescent, Southport, M'Side, PR9 7PF: Wants Vol 2 of Jonzo CHRONOLOGICAL BING - taped copy NOT required.

BARRY WHITTINGHAM, Caravan, First Avenue, Greasley St., Bulwell, Nottingham NG6 8NG:

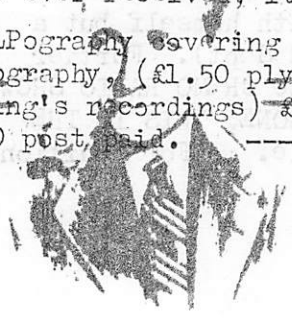
Number of Bing LPs and 545s for sale; an SAE is required for complete list with prices and postage.

THE BING novelty paperweight (photograph embedded in solid perspex) has delighted a large number of members - those who like the Crosbyana items. A few remain from ARTHUR BLOOD, £5 covers it all (£4 weight, £1 P & P) 597 Osmaston Road, Derby, DE2 8NE

STEVE THOMPSON, 13 Avignon, Milford Grange, Castletroy, Limerick, Ireland presents THE GOLDEN AGE OF ENTERTAINMENT - a vast range of vintage American radio material, including of course scores of Crosby programmes. Steve returned to Ireland from the States a few years backand launched his project. 270-page catalogue lists more than 900 cassettes covering most aspects of entertainment, and also including historic news announcements &c. Catalogue costs £6 and makes a fascinating volume in itself! Several members have expressed their warm appreciation of Steve's offerings and we learn now that other societies such as the Al Jolson, Gordon MacRae, Mario Lanza have now become keenly interested in what is available.

RON HUDSON, 17 Ollerton Green Jodrell Rd., Bow, London, E3 2LB: May I again submit some of my records to Trading Post with LPs and 78s which are not in good condition to be sold! (Editor: I must say this is the most baffling item we've ever received; its hardly calculated to sell, we feel !)

THE LPography covering around 1000 albums (£2.50 plus 30p P & P); The Mini-Discography, (£1.50 plus 20p) and the ABC OF BING (analysis of varying 'takes' of Bing's recordings) £2.00 plus 20p remain available - just; or all three for £5.00 post paid. --- apply to Editor.



We were a little remiss in printing thro' the picture of Bing at the bottom of the previous page, but it should be decipherable.

Understandably those holding Fred Reynolds's book, ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD, will have lost no time in getting from Fred the supplement (£1) as described in the previous issue, page 7. If, however, anyone did overlook the opportunity a few copies may still be available. To avoid time-wasting and possible refunds, it would be best to ring Fred on 021-783-2847 or write with a SAE in the first instance. Address p.3

THE EDITOR has quite a number of albums for sale, including the four Volumes of THE RADIO YEARS (£2.50 each, or all four for £8.00) Send SAE for details of other records available, and see last issue page 45.

With regard to the suggestion of a Crosby-coloured scarf for the ladies, as mooted by Audrey Cooper, sad to relate there was only ONE (!) letter of interest and support. We must, therefore, put the idea, good as it was, in abeyance.

FRANK MURPHY, 32 Ferndale Avenue, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear, NE28 7NE operates THE NEW BING CROSBY COLOUR PHOTO CLUB for those interested in collecting photographs. He is also handling enquiries for the Bing Crosby Historical Society (America) and the DICK TOOD book by SHELDON O'CONNELL - SAE with all enquiries please. UK cost of the Todd book is £4.90 post paid.

WE ARE OBLIGED TO ALL THOSE WHO WROTE CONCERNING COMPACT DISCS OF BING: THE DETAILS ARE BEING COLLATED FOR FUTURE USE.

IF THE "X" APPEARS IN THE BOX ON PAGE 3 INDICATING YOUR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION IS DUE PROMPT REMITTANCE IS OF CONSIDERABLE ASSISTANCE IN PLANNING FUTURE ISSUES. YOUR CO-OPERATION IS CORDIALLY INVITED.

MANY MEMBERS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE OFFER OF A C90 CASSETTE OF DICK TODD (£3.00 incl) AND WERE CONSIDERABLY INTRIGUED BY IT. The offer still stands - Editor.

Reference has been made to the passing of VIC BYNE on page 2. Vic died three years ago and now his widow, Mrs. Byne, has been in touch to tell us that at last she has to give up the house in 28 Upton Road, Slough, and move into a smaller house as she can no longer keep up the old house and the large garden. Very understandable.

But Mrs; Byne finds there will be no room for Vic's really astounding Crosby collection which has lain undisturbed virtually since he passed on. So, the lady now wants to dispose of it all, quite reluctantly, but for the obvious reason. She wants to hold no-one to ransom, nor does she want to be "ripped-off" as the saying goes. Anyone inferested in this great collection should write, or ring first (no. in book no doubt). Mrs. Byne cannot undertake the huge task of packing up and posting items, but will greatly appreciate assistance.

LETTERS ARE PROLIFIC: AND ALWAYS WELCOME - But they may be abbreviated or abridged for publication.

SYD WOODS, 28 Baird Terrace, Haddington, East Lothian, EH41 3AX:

I enjoy reading BING but I would like to protest against your treatment of Elvis Presley in issue No. 85. I cannot agree with you that Presley was merely a "manufactured phenomenon", his record - ings span 23 years and he enjoyed vast popularity for the last 21 years of his life. When Presley left the army in 1960 he concentrated mainly on ballads such as CAN'T HELP FALLING IN LOVE, FAME AND FORTUNE, FEVER, GENTLY, THERE'S ALWAYS ME. Later in his career Elvis recorded classic songs such as IN THE GHETTO, THE WONDER OF YOU, ALWAYS ON MY MIND and ITS MIDNIGHT among others. I am only 24 and can appreciate the music of both Elvis and Bing...

Editor: Ah me...I guess I ain't nuthin' but a houn' dog. We're not crossing swords with young Syd, far fromit - he is most certainly entitled to his views and we've no objection to presenting them. We did hope, however, that a note of compassion for Presley would have been discernible in what we said. As Syd is only 24 it is doubtful if he is aware of the first publicity that whipped around the world about "Elvis the Pelvis" and the fact that several states banned his performances. We're sure HE didn't dream all that up....his promoters !

LETTERS

GWEN HARVEY, 33 Canterbury Rd., Farnborough, Hants, GU14 6QP: I found most exciting the article about Jean-Paul Frereault and his quest at the library. I just can't wait to see more of these early pictures about Bing's career in those so-long-ago days....

Editor: More in this issue - and Gwen's is a fairly general reaction. Members really are fascinated by them. Older members for the sheer nostalgia, and the younger members who are amazed to see and read of how Bing burst upon the world....

PETER CARPENTER, 54 Sunview Aven., Peacehaven, East Sussex, BN9 8RR:

Many thanks for the latest BING - always of a very high standard, but I compliment you particularly on this edition. Informative, congenial, of absorbing interest, thoughtful and with the whole enterprise illuminated by a most comforting, reassuring nostalgic gentleness. I become completely engrossed in its pages and am taken back to a world and a time which, in retrospect, seems saner, more balanced and certainly calmer. I think anybody who has lived through the "Crosby years" - say 1930 onwards, will understand this sentiment. Your editorship captures this tone, because a love, almost a reverence for what you are doing, shines through. And the rays fall upon the readership.....

Editor: Be fair - we don't often publish this kind of letter, much as we appreciate it. Many thanks Peter.

LIONEL PAIRPOINT, 86 Ellesmere Aven., Mill Hill, London, NW7 3HD: Your notes on the album 'The Unforgettable Forties' caught my eye, because I recently purchased this, mainly for SAN ANTONIO ROSE, which is probably the least-issued of Bing's accredited million-sellers as far as micro-groove is concerned but was - like you - disappointed to find MCA had provided Pickwick (who issued the 40s album) with the edited version which originally appeared on the Coral (CPS 81) RHYTHM ON THE RANGE album. As far as I am aware the unedited version has only appeared in this country on the old Brunswick EP 'THEY SOLD A MILLION' andslightly more recently on the World Records THE VERY BEST OF BING. One could suppose that this editing generates the "new" soubriquet but it is more likely that this is because Bob Wills, the composer(the sleeve of the album describes him as Bob Willis - probably dash off the song between taking wickets for England!) recorded an instrumental version in 1936 before adding the familiar words in 1940.

> Further to the gaffés on record sleeves, I have just obtained an LP entitled ALL AMERICAN STARS on Fioretti (!) FI3639 which features three Bing radio tracks - NOW IS THE HOUR (easy), WITH THE MOON IN THE SKY (Huh?) and IF YOU SHOULD EVER ASK ME with Peggy Lee (double Huh!). It transpires that the latter two titles are, in fact, YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW THE LANGUAGE and YOU WAS. I shouldn't buy it if you come across it - the fidelity has the quality of having been recorded in a public convenience - two miles away!

I can recall the case of IN A LITTLE SPANISH TOWN vs WHY, the latter being a big hit for Frankie Avalon in the States and a minor one for Anthony Newley over here. (DISCROSBY last issue; the case where the judge expressed pleasure at the thought of hearing Mr. Crosby singing in the court!) The High Court's ruling was that although there was a definite degree of similiarity between the two songs, it was insufficient to constitute an infringement of copyright. So, hard luck for Mabel Wayne, who also gave us the 'biggies' RAMONA, and IT HAPPENED IN MONTEREY. Mabel acquired the title of 'First Lady of American Popular Song' but I think Dorothy Fields should have had something to say about this. Her songs were also well covered by Bing over the years - I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE, THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT, EXACTLY LIKE YOU, A FINE ROMANCE, ON THE SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET, DON'T BLAME ME, CUBAN LOVE SONG &c.

Editor: Informative Lionel! I just love MY SIN IS IN LOVE though - actually not a bad phonetic interpretation (if taken over the phone!) for the song, MY CYNTHIA'S IN LOVE!! Indeed, it was our old friend Geoff Milne who originally omitted the band chorus from SAN ANTONIO ROSE on the basis that it was incongruous with the presentation of the album, RHYTHM ON THE RANGE (Coral CPS 81)i.e. brother Bob Crosby's big-band Dixieland sound didn't tone in with a 'country' flavour... there was something in this view but we maintain the recording shouldn't have been edited.

The legal contest over LITTLE SPANISH TOWN/WHY was futile for any similarity was very tenuous. There have been much more flagrant cases of near-plagiarism. Reminds us that years and years ago (in the 30's!) a character by the name of Eddie Pola (clever chap, too) used to do a radio programme entitled TWISTED TUNES - tunes that bore a resemblance to another. And some of the examples he produced were quite startling.

GIRVAN PATERSON, 18 Coolibar Aven., Seaford, Victoria, 3198, Australia:

I find most of the Pete Moore orchestrations on the Anniversary Set well done and not too intrusive on Bing's vocals but I must say, in a personal view, I would have preferred a smaller jazz 'combo' style of backing rather than the full brassy orchestra. I buy the CDs though I haven't a player against the time when I DO have one - and the CDs may no longer be available!

Regarding the comments on the remake of STAGECOACH I remember one reviewer saying that he expected Bing to burst into I'M AN OLD COWHAND during the Indian attack! As stated, this was a film in which Bing sang not a note.

> I wonder if you are aware that this film was recently remade again for television with Johnny Cash, and with Willie Nelson in the Thomas Mitchell/ Bing Crosby role? But the big surprise is that Mary Crosby plays the pregnant girl in this version, and I don't think Bing would have approved of the rather crude scene of her giving birth.

The film was a total flop, but it must make some kind of strange Hollywood history: can anyone think of another instance where the offspring of a famous star has appeared in a remake of one of their parents' films? And I don't mean like Sean Flynn making SON OF CAPTAIN BLOOD - it wasn't really a remake.

> The 1932 article, I SURRENDER, DEAR, gives a great insight into the impact Bing was making at the very beginning of his great solo career, a career which was to change the singing style of the world, he was receiving, of course, so early the kind of adulation that more recent generations associate with Presley and the Beatles - but again, Bing was first.

Speaking of the Beatles I was browsing thro' a friend's biography of John Lennon where I read he - Lennon - said that he was intrigued by the use of the world 'please' in the Bing Crosby recording of that name and that it inspired him to write the lyrics for the Beatles first big hit, PLEASE, PLEASE ME. The book also noted that during his last years Lennon tried to collect "everything that Bing Crosby ever recorded". This comes as a bit of a shock, surely? Can it be that belatedly this young man, symbol of an entirely different musical era, suddenly became 'victim' to the magic of Bing?

Editor: That last part of Girvan's letter is startling - and perhaps illuminating. Good thinkin - to get the CDs even without a player.... But it seems Girvan is taking an each way bet on the Anniversary set! He approves the Moore orchestrations - but would have preferred a smaller jazz combination! In that case, I submit, he was almost back to the original - Buddy Colé! Add a clarinet, and perhaps a trumpet, and that would have been the ideal!

GIL McKEE, 26 Whitehill Aven., Bangor, Co. Down, N. Ireland BT20 4DY:

I haven't got a CD player but I've heard them playing in a local shop; and I've noticed theyare all played, for demonstration, in quite expensive equipment. But what's the sound like when played through less expensive speakers? I would think it wouldn't be impressive; Also, the quality of the sound would depend on how well the engineer transferred the material onto CD. It seems to me that people rave about the sound of CDs but I'll bet there are a lot of CDs that aren't as good as the old LP.

Editor: This gives us the opportunity to answer many queries: a CD player is NOT a player until it is connected to an amplifier - just like a cassette deck, or a record deck. They emit no sound unless.... Shops certainly demonstrate the players on their best rquipment - they always have - with cassette decks, furntables &c. But there is little doubt Gil would lose any wager about some CDs not sounding as good as "the old lps"!! But then, there are those who maintain that old 78s sound better than the "new" LPs. One thing is certain: if your records (LPs &c) sound good on your equipment, then CDs will sound

immeasurably, startlingly, better! You can be assured of that. As for the quality of the CD depending on the skill of the transfer engineer, this is less important with CDs than it is with LPs! All sorts of tricks are done with them - echo, bass/treble response, editing and so on. CDs are the faithful original recordings in superlative quality.

LEN HAWKINGS, 18 Sturdon Rd., Ashton, Bristol, BS3 2BA: I recently got a copy of BING SINGS CROSBY (Broadway, Intermission BR 139) which includes AFRICAN SAFARI MEDLEY. As the items are all parodies I can't for the life of me put names to all the original songs. I wonder if you or any of our members can?

Editor: We don't happen to possess this somewhat off-beat album but it was made for private purposes and not commercial ones. Bing apparently wrote the lyrics for varying versions of BLUE OF THE NIGHT, FROM MONDAY ON, GHOST OF A CHANCE, AT YOUR COMMAND, WHERE THE TURF MEETS THE SURF, LOVE ME TONIGHT, TENDERFOOT and WALTZING IN A DREAM. The material for the album was culled from Bing's private collection, we understand.

The special relationship our member, STAN WHITE, (57 Stanley St., Bothwell, Kettering, Northants) enjoyed with BUDDY COLE was recently noted here. Stan has now received the following letter; while not acknowledging or denying the claims of the writer as a Crosby expert, it is nevertheless of interest:

Dear Stan:

Am spending a good part of a chilly Spring Friday afternoon warming things up by listening to the Bing Crosby 10th Anniversary collection. I ordered the three CDs through an ad. on cable TV. Everyone involved in the project is to be congratulated. Everything is so wonderfully fresh and stylish - completely in the Crosby idiom and tradition. And the sound is spectacular! Obviously a "labor of love" for Ken Barnes and Pete Moore. I hope they sell millions of copies. I know Buddy would have loved the results. As you know, he was not a schooled musician in the conservatory sense but rather an instinctive, self-taught type. But he knew what was right, what "worked". From living with him during the last nine years of his life, I learned what talent was all about. Its a thrill for me to hear him play again, digitally remastered, no less.

My deep thanks to you, Stan, for keeping my mother informed all these years. She deeply appreciates it. I think Buddy has better friends and admirers in England than even in Hollywood which, in fact, sold out to trash years ago. Best to you, Sincerely, JEFF WOODRUFF

This gentleman is the stepson of Buddy Cole, now engaged in radio in Wyoming. A nice letter to receive.

BARRY WHITTINGHAM, Caravan, First Avenue, Greasley St., Bulwell, Nottingham:

A magazine I take (monthly) reviews all popular releases on CD and in this month's there is mention of a Duke Ellington CD on Hermes HRM 6001. The title is DUKE ELLINGTON 1927-34 and one track is given as THE RHYTHM BOYS - "THREE LITTLE BOYS"! I presume this is one of those humorous slips for THREE LITTLE WORDS! Souce of the records, apparently, is not 78s but vinyl test pressings and therefore are of much better sound quality. I shall endeavour to pick it up.

On your mention of Bing recording with Bill Justis, your history is wrong.

RICH ? TAPESTRY ?

We all remember that Michael Parkinson did a popular "chat" show for the BBC-TV some years back in the course of which he had as guests such legendary figures as FRED ASTAIRE, JAMES CAGNEY, PAT O'BRIEN, ALICE FAYE, BOB HOPE and of course, BING (on two occasions).

He is now doing a similar programme for ITV entitled ONE FOR ONE and we recently caught a glimpse - no more - of Parkinson interviewing BOY GEORGE...

All part of life's - or TV's - rich tapestry, no doubt !

RAUNCHY was n instrumental recording and was a worldwide hit - in 1957. Bill was a saxophone player and featured prominently on RAUNCHY. He died, alas, at the age of 55 on July 15, 1982. So he was 33 when he recorded with Bing.

Editor: Ah me, editor puts his head on the block with every issue with such lynx-eyed readers! And that's good - though on this occasion we cane come back, as they say! Like this: If Bill died in 1982 when he was 55, he was born in 1927. Ok? He made the album with Bing (GREAT COUNTRY HITS) in 1963 - so he must then have been - 36?

BRYAN STEVENS, 449 Blake St., London, Ontario, Canada, N6K 2N5:

We were in Pennsylvania and a local magazine there had an interesting story of Bob Hope's life and career. Naturally there were many references to his association with Bing. Included was the story of Bing's "no show" at the Friar's Club tribute to Bob in 1950 which was - to me at least - very enlightening.

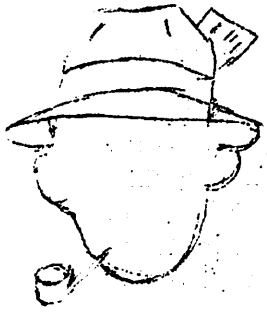
> Bob has always made wisecracks and remarks at all kinds of people, important or otherwise, including those in authority. The story writer related that Bing always respected other persons, particularly those in authority, with public office. Prior to the Friar's dinner, Bing was sent a rough script of proposed dialogue with Bob. It apparently contained some mildly insulting remarks by Hope about some Government figures, including the President. Bing had said he would be there but after reading this script became somewhat upset and put out at the cracks about the President and others. He decided therefore, against appearing and stayed away completely rather than be associated in any way with the remarks.

We occasionally get visits from a young student who attends the University here in London (Ottawa) while her home is in the north. Turned out this girl was a Judy Garland fan but could find only a few records of her to purchase. I put together, therefore, a couple of tapes for her of Judy guesting on Bing's radio shows. She thought they were tremendous - and certainly enjoyed Bing's part in them, too. So much so, that when she returned home she played them to some friends who also agreed they were great. In fact, one girl has now become a Crosby collector! Which goes to show, I feel, that if the younger generation only get the opportunity to hear material better than is being served up, they can appreciate it.

Editor: Excellent! We get around, you notice!

GREG MARSHALL, 43 Longlands Court, Westbourne Grove, London, W11 2QE:

I've often wondered why Bing made only one solo album - RETURN TO PARADISE ISLANDS - for Sinatra's Reprise label....he was there only a year.



Editor: I think the case was that Bing made this album for Reprise as a gesture to Sinatra. He was freelancing at the time where and when he felt like it. He certainly never had anything like an exclusive contract with Reprise. He made albums with Warners, Epic, Pickwick, and all kinds of companies that - probably - approached him after he ended his marathon Decca contract. Indeed, there was a period when it seemed Bing had a distinct reluctance to go on recording, and seemed as if intent on retiring completely. Happily, the old show business instinct prevailed.

BILL CHATFIELD, 37 Newton St., Olney, Bucks, MK46 4BS:

Listening recently to the Sunday Half-Hour on Radio 2 I

heard the inmates of one of HM Prisons sing during the service THE OLD RUGGED CROSS. It was beautifully sung with feeling, I thought, and a joy to listen to. I began to wonder which Commandments they had broken. I am saying all this for a reason: I have never heard Bing sing THE OLD RUGGED CROSS and I don't know whether he ever recorded it. But through the years I've thought what the impact would have been had he sung it. I can imagine it would have stilled the civilised world for a few moments.

Editor: Stilled the civilised world! Good thought Bill. Bing did not record this religious song (or sing it on the radio as far as we can trace) though he did, of course, record many hymns, spirituals, religious songs as well as the carols. Actually, THE OLD RUGGED CROSS, while a lovely song sung in its intended manner, lends itself to all kinds of treatment. Several 'trad' or Dixieland bands have recorded it - including Chris Barber's! In fact, I recall a TV SONGS OF PRAISE where the Avon Cities Jazz Band played it while the audience - beg pardon, congregation - sang it in jazz style!

> And it is a favourite for rather raucous interpretations in the pubs of South Wales just before closing time, together with GOD BLESS THE PRINCE OF WALES - to different lyrics. Not vulgar ones, just different, e.g.
>
> "They talk about the mountains, they talk about the dales,
> But seldom do they mention the miners of South Wales.."
> and so on. Not many miners left now.....

What commandments did the prisoner-congregation break? Between them, all of 'em I would suggest. No doubt the reason they sang with such feeling !

CHAS. WILKINSON, 8 Old Coach Lane, Belfast, N. Ireland, BT9

I used to buy the GRAMOPHONE Popular Catalogue as it gave details of virtually every record of popular song recorded over the last 60 years which was currently available. Tucked in among a lot of modern rubbish were the names like Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, Dick Haymes, Mel Tomme, J lie London, and of course, the immortal Bing. Sadly, it ceased publication in December last. Can any of our members tell me where I can get a similar catalogue of the really great entertainers of popular music - all subjects of King Bing? Others would like to know, I am certain.

PS Our local commercial (radio) station remembered Bing's 10th anniversary with an enjoyable two-hour programme!

Editor: Know the GRAMOPHONE CATALOGUE well - but the last one I got was a waste of time and money. I can understand why they have ceased publication: there has been such a revolution (being added to now by the CD syndrome) in the record industry resulting in all kinds of independent labels which probably don't bother to subscribe to any catalogues. Fly-by-night pop operators. And it has been clear for a long time now that records do not stay in the lists as they once did. Most of us know that you have to snap up a LP as soon as you see it these days - or never see it again! The shop assistants are interested only in the accursed "charts" and "Top Ten" and have no hesitati n in telling customers that an LP is "no longer available" or "deleted". And they are often right. We're generalising, of course, for there are genuine shops here and there.

Veterans will remember the times when Crosby 78s made in the early 'Thirties were still in the catalogues - and available - in the 1950s. Perhaps the microgroove introduction was the first step in the revolution? Now its all the "fast-buck" principle in record dealing. We know of a list or two, but they are sadly incomplete - and the CD cataloguing is even worse.

MULLING OVER THAT WONDERFUL LEGACY OF GRAMOPHONE RECORDS **********

DISC Crosby.

...thro' so many, many, years....

OVER the years we've read many things about young brother BOB CROSBY; he hated being Bing's brother; he found Bing an unsympathetic brother, he found Bing a supportive brother...and so on. We all know now how some of these books and articles are inspired and just how much validity can be attached to them.

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Its not difficult, however, to imagine that Bob did find it tough being a kid brother to the mighty Bing! He had the Crosby timbre to an extent if not the style - the flair? Handsome and very personable he no doubt discovered quite early, bent as he also was on a show business career, that if he did sound rather like Bing in a limited sense, he would instantly be dismissed as being "no where near as good as Bing". If he WAS good he would be "cashing in on his brother's name". Difficult indeed for the young man. And while on the subject of tye younger brother, what about the elder - Everett? Was that appearance on the Sgt. Bilko show his first and only screen appearance?

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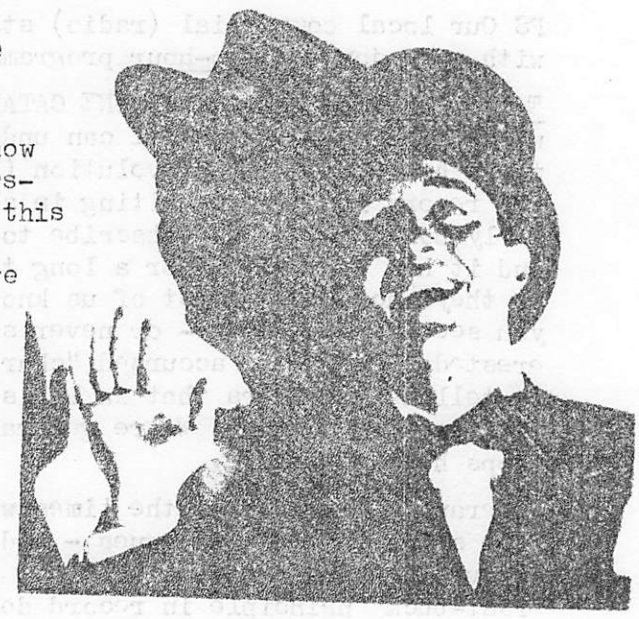
However, back to Bob - and his luck! If, as he always maintains, Bing was lucky how about Bob? He fell into a position which proved popular, successful - and in its way enduring. Most will know that when Ben Pollack, who led a highly successful band decided to give it up and run a club, the members of the band were reluctant to disband. So, they looked around for someone "handsome and personable". Who better than young Bob Crosby - Crosby indeed, what a name - and could also sing to 'front' the band?

****

So, with no formal musical training, like Bing, Bob got the sort of push Bing got when he joined Whiteman. Bob took the opportunity with both hands and we all know just how successful he was with his Orchestra (and his Bobcats!). We brought all this to mind when, not for the first time, we noted that very early on brother Bing gave him another powerful push - whatever he may have said on times about the handicap of being Bing's brothers.



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In 1938 Bing 'used' Bob's band for recording sessions - again Bob was a young 24, the age at which Bing and Al Rinker was spotted by Paul Whiteman.

So, barely had Bob got in front of the band than big brother Bing was giving him the tremendous fillip of recording with him, an opportunity most other bandleaders would have given an arm for! Not such an indifferent brother, surely? Have patience, we've nearly got to what we set out to say!

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With Whiteman, Bing sang the hits of the day, intersprsed of course with specialiaties from The Rhythm Boys - like GRANDMA, MISSISSIPPI MUD and BLUE BIRDS AND BLACKBIRDS. Similarly, hits of the day with Gus Arnheim, Jimmy Grier minus the RBs. Then films came into it so that by 1934 when the big Decca project started Bing was so firmly established (and with Jack Kapp so skillfully guiding his recordings) that he began, on occasion, to get away from the 'hits of the day' and film songs, paramount as they were.

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Perhaps the first such excursion was JUST A'WEARYING FOR YOU, a song hitherto associated with more 'formal' singers. Then came the slight arguments over recording carols which, happily, Kapp won. In 1938 with Bob's band came one of the most off-beat songs Bing ever recorded, to wit OLD FOLKS ! A song that had, it seemed, no chorus, no verse - in fact, was a poem set to music. And not, be it noted, to the music usually associated with Bob Crosby and his Orchestra! In fact, it reminds us of aVictorian ballad with its beginning, middle, and end telling an appealing story. Indeed, painting a lovely picture - not Victorian, of course, for the setting is (we must imagine) a small, rural, rambling town in the West of America.

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OLD FOLKS is, of course, not plural but the singular - the story of the oldest inhabitant, an eccentric but lovable character. Perhaps in the person of Walter Brennan, or "Old Gabby" both of whom used to effectively to dominate, if not steal, so many Westerns from the big stars. The song was composed by a team - Robinson-Hill - of whom we know nothing unless the latter was in fact Billy Hill, renowned as the writer of THE LAST ROUND-UP. We cannot recollect this song ever being broadcast by Bing or anybody else. Indeed, we have never heard the song by anyone but Bing - and it came as new to us when the OLD MASTERS Vol I came out in 1962. Good gracious, its now more than a quarter of a century ago...

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The lyric has some splendid lines: "..how he held the speech at Gettysburg for Lincoln that day.." Later on, it asks if he fought for the "blue or the grey - he'll never come right out and say." Slight problem there for if he held the speech for Lincoln he surely fought for the Yanks - the Greys! Or is our American-history faulty? And in the evening, he went fishing... "but he only caught a perch or two - a whale got away!"

****

"He meets the late train at the station; sits and whittles when its overdue..." What a picture it all conjures up. And the slightly poignant ending:

"Some day there'll be no old folks....
Childrens' voices at play,
Will be stilled for a day,
The day they take old folks away....."

****

Before leaving the Bing-Bob combination it may be of interest that together they made eighteen records, every one of them high on the list for popularity. They were:

1. You must have been a beautiful baby
2. Old folks
3. My Reverie
4. Tea for two (with Connee of course)
5. Yes, Indeed! " " " "
6. San Antonio Rose.
7. It makes no difference now
8. Dolores (with Merry Macs
9. Pale moon (with Merry Macs)
10. Lazy
11. Let's start the New Year right
12. I've plenty of be thankful for
13. I'll capture your heart
14. Longing (unissued for some reason)
15. When my dreamboat comes home
16. Walking the floor over you.
17. That's how much I love you
18. Rose of Santa Rosa.

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Bob's tally, therefore, includes the block-busting SAN ANTONIO ROSE even if Geoff. Milne didn't like the band chorus (see letters this issue!) He was also associated with the epic film HOLIDAY INN though the band didn't appear. In fact, the musical direction side of this film was quite complicated in that there was a Musical Director in the person of Robert Emmett Dolan a Musical Assistant Arthur Franklin, Vocal arrangements by Joseph Lilley, and Special Arrangements by Bob Crosby's Orchestra. I wonder who was treading on whose toe in that line-up?

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WHEN MY DREAMBOAT COMES HOME and certainly WALKING THE FLOOR OVER YOU are two more titles that are particular favourite Bing numbers and that also goes for TEA FOR TWO and YES INDEED! the two jazz-orientated tracks that have become legendary recordings among those who know.

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The Bing-Bob association therefore, beginning in October 1938 and continuing intermittently until December, 1946 was fruitful for all concerned.

****

MY REVERIE, incidentally, (No. 3 above) was taken from a classical Debussy composition of the same name and arranged, no doubt with the lyric, by one Larry Clinton. The purloining of classical melodies - with a lyric - to make a popular song has often happened. STRANGER IN PARADISE is one of the best-known examples being a Borodin composition adapted for the show KISMET. Another is SO DEEP IS THE NIGHT (Tristesse) from a Chopin piece. Not sung by Bing, of course. If tastefully done there is nothing wrong with the practice.

****

Mention of OLD MASTERS reminds us that it contained yet another off-beat track - DEAR OLD GIRL. A melancholy ditty which tells of the passing of a life-partner - always a devastating experience for the one left. This had no conventional accompaniment and might even be said to have had the complete reverse of Bob Crosby treatment in that it was by Ivan Dittmars on piano, with a vocal trio, THE THREE CHEERS. In the non-solo part of this track one hears Bing joining the others to make a quartet and is clearly heard in the baritone part.

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The composers of DEAR OLD GIRL are Buck-Morse, another team unknown to us. And again, another song we've hrard sung by no one other than Bing.

Reverting to HOLIDAY INN, the film which saw of course the appearance of the phenomenal Irving Berlin song, WHITE CHRISTMAS - and which, unaccountably, Bob Crosby did not accompany on the commercial recording, you will see from the Kraft listing at the end of this issue that Bing actually sang WHITE CHRISTMAS on the radio on Christmas Day 1941 !

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This broadcast therefore pre-dated the film, which was in production from March to May, and also the first commercial recording on 29 May 1942 by almost six months. Really surprising what can be discovered on browsing ! Seems Bing was trying out the song before it was decided on for the film....

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Ever since a vicious guard-dog slipped its chain - somehow - and promptly dug its fangs into my calf virtually 40 years ago I have not been in the class of the population known as "dog-lovers". Sadly, the reverse is true and I have a real fear of them and consider them, even the most 'lovable' as unreliable and potentially treacherous. Which, in this unreasoning dog-fanatic country should have made me a lot of friends by now!. In fact, my biggest laugh of the year (and we can do with 'em all) is the newsreel pictures of proud owners trotting round with their hounds at Cruft's ! Ah me.....

****

I don't know whether Cruft's have a theme-song: HOW MUCH IS THAT DOGGIE IN THE WINDOW, OLD SHEP or ...POOR OLD ROVER! The last-named is, of course, another of those off-beat songs Bing recorded and naturally, it is about a DOG reaching the end of its days. This is another little-known record tho' it is known a number of Crosby people rate it highly; despite what is said earlier above, I have a much greater preference, I'm afraid, for the OLD SHEP song. POOR OLD ROVER strikes me as particularly tuneless - as well as maudlin. Come to think of it, OLD SHEP is maudlin' too, but a more attractive song.

****

Its not known whether Bing was a dog-man or not; he recorded POOR OLD ROVER in March 1939 but the record didn't seem to attract too much attention and it has been conspicuous by its absence on reissue albums. With his ranches and other estates no doubt he did own dogs - he referred affectionately, but no doubt fictitiously, to "old Cindy Lou" in GONE FISHIN' The accompaniment to the record was by John Scott Trotter's Frying Pan Five and hardly the combination one would have expected for such a song. In fact, this band within-a-band was used normally on such numbers as WHEN THE BLOOM IS ON THE SAGE, DOWN BY THE OLD MILLSTREAM, IDA -SWEET AS APPLE CIDER and EL RANCHO GRANDE - not jazz, but certainly up-tempo songs.

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A prudent note is required in connection with paragraph 3 above about a guard-dog slipppng its chain: I was an innocent passer-by and not, of course, engaged in any nefarious or even criminal proceedings !

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News of the release, or re-release, by CBS of A BING CROSBY COLLECTION, Vols 1, II and III is not only confirmed by a story in THE CROSBY VOICE, magazine of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society, but amply added to in that there will now be FOUR volumes with two EXTRA tracks to the riginal LP issues - these new releases are on Compact Disc. This will surely turn out to be the biggest and most attractive Crosby package ever but can only be surpassed by the issue on CD of BING'S HOLLYWOOD.

THE KMH LISTINGS

S is customary, the final two pages consist of listings of the songs Bing sang in the KMH radio shows 47 years ago. They are worthy of special comment on this occasion, we feel.

To begin with, this listing covers the world-shaking event of 7th Dec. 1941 when Japan made her devastating air-raid on Pearl Harbour in Hawaii - the day described by President Roosevelt as A DAY OF INFAMY. You note that from then on a militaristic note unnaturally creeps into the programmes. There are songs like ANY BONDS TODAY?, ANCHORS AWEIGH, ANGELS OF MERCY, OH! HOW I HATE TO GET UP IN THE MORNING - and even THE WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER! It was all a very rude shock to Americans. They were conscious that a war was going on in Europe and that England appeared to be on its last legs! All, that is, except the President! From then on, however, we were comrades in arms.

Among the guests Bing had younger members may like to know that personalities such as Chester Morris, Donald Crisp, Gail Patrick, Rita Hayworth, Ida Lupino, John Garfield, Carole Landis, Walter Huston, Veronica Lake, George Murphy, and others were all celebrated film stars.

> It is most interesting to find that Bing sang 'TIS AUTUMN on KMH 8th January 1942. This was a song he never recorded although DICK TODD did with considerable success. Furthermore it is the song where towards the end he sings "boo-boo-boo - oh excuse me, that's Crosby!" A fine song and one we would much have liked to have heard Bing sing. In all the KMH tapes we've heard we haven't managed to catch this. Bing sang it again on 18th Dec. 1941....

You will note also the fairly regular appearance on these shows of Connee Boswell - she was Connie in those days. All the familiar duets appear, e.g. BASIN ST. BLUES, EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME, THE HUT-SUT SONG as well as lesser-known songs. YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE appears for the first time; this was a big war-time hit here and considered a great morale-booster in very, very dark days.

These KMH radio shows also significantly highlight Bing's colossal work-rate, though he would never so describe it! Radio shows themselves didn't just happen; they had to be planned, produced, rehearsed, performed - and as the guests indicate (Mary Martin, Brian Donlevy) Bing was spending all his days making films (BIRTH OF THE BLUES was in production precisely at the period indicated. In fact, at this time - and before and after - Bing was making films on an almost conveyor-belt basis! ROAD TO ZANZIBAR was completed just before he started on BIRTH OF THE BLUES! And Bing was going into the Decca studios at least once a month to make gramophone records !

> NO WONDER BING EAGERLY PUT HIS MONEY AND INFLUENCE BEHIND THE MAGNETIC TAPE PROJECTS AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II !

Finally, Bing demonstrated his regard for musicians - Wingy Manone and Andy Secrest, both trumpet players of note - and golfer Sam Snead, too !

12 JUNE 1941 Guests: Chester Morris
Donald Crisp
Ethel Waters

WHY CRY, BABY?
BECAUSE OF YOU
THE ROSE OF TRALEE
EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME (with Connee Boswell)
CLEMENTINE
'TIL REVEILLE.

19 June 1941 Guests: Jimmy O'Brien
Gail Patrick
Bert Lahr

YOU'RE A DOUBLE LOVELY
MARIA ELENA
THE HUT-SUT SONG (with Connee Boswell)
IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE NOW
AS SHE SITS IN HER LOW-BACK CHAIR (with Jimmy O'Brien)
YOURS (QUIEREME MUCHO)

26 JUNE 1941 : According to the records Bing didn't appear on KMH on this date.

3 July 1941

CAN'TCHA TELL
THESE THINGS YOU LEFT ME
IN THE GLOAMING
EASY STREET (with Connee Boswell)
IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE NOW.
THE ROSE OF TRALEE

10 July 1941 Guests: Rita Hayworth
Wingy Manone

YOU'RE A DOUBE LOVELY
I CAN'T REMEMBER TO FORGET
SWEET AND LOW
YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE (with Connee Boswell)
MARIA ELENA
THE BLUES (with Connee Boswell and Wingy Manone)
'TIL REVEILLE

17 July 1941 Guests: Ida Lupino
Bronsky & Babin, pianists

YOU TALK TOO MUCH
BALLIN' THE JACK
YOURS (QUIEREME MUCHO)
WE GO WELL TOGETHER (with Connee Boswell)
YOU AND I
YOU'LL NEVER REMEMBER.

24 July 1941 Guests: John Garfield
Florence George
Billy Cahn

CAN'TCHA TELL
OLD BLACK JOE
I CAN'T REMEMBER TO FORGET
YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE (with Connee Boswell)
CLEMENTINE
MARIA ELENA

31 July 1941 Guest: Mary Martin

WE GO WELL TOGETHER (with Connee Boswell)
YOU AND I
IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE NOW
YOU TALK TOO MUCH
REUBEN & RACHEL (with Mary Martin)
YOU'LL NEVER REMEMBER

BING THEN ON HOLIDAY UNTIL :

30 October 1941

YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE
HUMPTY DUMPTY HEART
TA-RA-RA-BOOM-DE-AY
YES INDEED! (with Connee Boswell)
THE ANNIVERSARY WALTZ
YOU AND I.

6 November 1941 Guests: Michelle Morgan
Brian Donlevy

CHATTANOOGA CHOO CHOO
DO YOU CARE?
I WONDER WHAT'S BECOME OF SALLY?
TEA FOR TWO (with Connee Boswell)
SHEPHERD SERENADE
LONE STAR TRAIL

13 November 1941 Guest : Andy Secrest

B-I-BI
WHY DON'T WE DO THIS MORE OFTEN?
IT MUST BE TRUE
BASIN ST. BLUES (with Connee Boswell)
I SEE A MILLION PEOPLE (But all I can see
WHO CALLS? is you)

20 November 1941 Guests: Jinx Falkenburg
Donald Crisp

CHATTANOOGA CHOO CHOO
BE HONEST WITH ME
ANY BONDS TODAY?
WHEN I LOST YOU
ROSE O'DAY (with Connee Boswell)
HUMPTY DUMPTY HEART
THE ANNIVERSARY WALTZ

27 November 1941 Guests: Wendy Barrie
Wingy Manone
Hank Bauer

B-I-BI
SHEPHERD'S SERENADE
BLUES IN THE NIGHT
I WANT A GIRL (just like the girl that married dear old dad)
I SEE A MILLION PEOPLE (but all I can see is you)

4 December 1941 Guests: Walter Huston
Carole Landis
Victor Borge

THE WHISTLER'S MOTHER - in-LAW
BE HONEST WITH ME
THE MAGIC OF MAGNOLIAS
ROSE O'DAY (with Connee Boswell)
MARY'S A GRAND OLD NAME

11 December 1941 Guests: Veronica Lake
Jerry Lester
Paul Robeson
Bob Coote
Victor Borge

ANY BONDS TODAY? (with Connee Boswell)
WHO CALLS?
GOODBYE, LITTLE DARLIN' GOODBYE
THE SWEETHEART OF SIGMA CHI
HUMPTY DUMPTY HEART.

18 December 1941 Guests: George Murphy
Kraft Choral Club
Victor Borge

ANCHORS AWEIGH
THE MAGIC OF MAGNOLIAS
THE WHISTLER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW
SANTA CLAUS IS COMIN' TO TOWN (with George Murphy)
WHEN I GROW TOO OLD TO DREAM
DON'T LET JULIA FOOL YA (with Connee Boswell)
'TIS AUTUMN
ANGELS OF MERCY
THE ANNIVERSARY WALTZ

25 December 1941 Guest: Frank McHugh

ADESTE FIDELIS
CHATTANOOGA CHOO CHOO
OH! HOW I HATE TO GET UP IN THE MORNING
ROSE O'DAY
WHITE CHRISTMAS
SHEPHERD SERENADE

1 January 1942 Guests: Mary Martin
Wingy Manone
Victor Borge

LET'S START THE NEW YEAR RIGHT
THE WHISTLER'S MOTHER-in-LAW
THE MAGIC OF MAGNOLIAS
WAIT TILL THE SUN SHINES, NELLIE (with Mary Martin)
SHEPHERD SERENADE
THE WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER

8 January 1942 Guests: Mary Martin
Jerry Lester

YOU'RE A GRAND OLD FLAG
GOODBYE, LITTLE DARLIN' GOODBYE
MY MELANCHOLY BABY
THE WAITER AND THE PORTER AND THE UP-STAIRS MAID (with Mary Martin and Jerry Lester)
'TIS AUTUMN
DAYDREAMING

15 January 1942 Guest: Mary Martin

THE US FIELD ARTILLERY MARCH (The Caissons go rolling along)
BLUES IN THE NIGHT
I KNOW WHY (and so do you)
STOP THROWING STONES AT NELL (with Mary Martin)
CLEMENTINE
THE WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER

22 January 1942 Ghest: Mary Martin

THE ARMY AIR CORPS SONG
DREAMSVILLE, OHIO
DAYDREAMING
WAIT TILL THE SUN SHINES, NELLIE (with Mary Martin)
McNAMARA'S BAND
THE ANNIVERSARY WALTZ

29 January 1942 Guests: Madeleine Carroll
Igor Gorin
Sam Snead

THE US FIELD ARTILLERY MARCH (The caissons go rolling on)
CHATTANOOGA CHOO CHOO
DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS
BLUES IN THE NIGHT
ROSE O'DAY (with Mary Martin)
HOME ON THE RANGE
WHO CALLS?

5 February 1942 Guests: John Garfield
Wingy Manone

THE YANKEE DOODLE BOY
DREAMSVILLE, OHIO
I DON'T WANT TO WALK WITHOUT YOU
NOBODY'S DARLIN' BUT MINE
JEALOUS
THE ANNIVERSARY WALTZ

For both 12 and 19 February 1942 Bing didn't appear on KMH. Reason not known.

26 February, 1942 Guest: Mary Martin

THE ARMY AIR CORPS SONG
DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS
THE WHISTLER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW
ROSE O'DAY (with Mary Martin)
MISS YOU
MY MELANCHOLY BABY

5 March 1942 Guest: Jack Teagarden

NOBODY'S DARLIN' BUT MINE
BLUES IN THE NIGHT
DAYDREAMING
THE WAITER AND THE PORTER AND THE UP-STAIRS MAID (with Mary Martin and Jack Teagarden)
SOMEDAY, SWEETHEART
THE WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER

12 March 1942 Guests: Pat O'Brien
Wingy Manone
Miss Mary I. Barber, Quartermaster Corps

HOW ABOUT YOU?
DEAR OLD DONEGAL (with Pat O'Brien)
I DON'T WANT TO WALK WITHOUT YOU
DARLING NELLIE GRAY
WE'RE THE COUPLE IN THE CASTLE (with Mary Martin)
SONG OF THE QUARTERMASTER CORPS
MISS YOU.